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COMICS COLLECTOR

FALL • 1985 Number 9

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STAFF

PUBLISHER:
Doug Watson

EDITORS:
Don & Maggie Thompson

STAFF EDITOR:
Kim Metzger

DESIGN:
Paul Tofte

CC PRICE GUIDE:
Alex G. Malloy

ADVERTISING MANAGER:
John Koenig

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EDITORIAL

When we began as professional writers, we always assumed that it was elves who did all the detail-work in the magazines we read.

Who, after all, ever even *glances* at the statements you'll find in tiny type on the contents page? "POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ***Comics Collector***, Iola, Wis. 54945" and all that sort of thing simply must spring into spontaneous existence every issue, we thought.

When we became editors, not only did we find that an actual human being had to take care of that sort of thing, it turned out that *we* were the actual human beings involved.

It's like being nibbled to death by ducks.

Look at the pages of art in every issue of ***Comics Collector***. Now look at the tiny type you'll find by almost every piece of art. See it? For every one of those, we had to look up (usually three or four times, because we handle art and text separately, and which copyright date goes with which piece of art invariably becomes a muddled matter) the tiny type which had originally appeared in the magazine containing the piece of art we used to illustrate information in the text. And some *other* poor soul before us had had to be sure to write the tiny type that went on *that* item.

And so it goes.

Every fact you find in ***CC*** has been checked several times — and errors will *still* creep in. In our Spring 1985 issue, we captioned a photo of Jo Duffy with the information that she was the assistant editor of the Epic line. Well, she's *actually* the *managing* editor of the Epic line (and a nice job she does of it, too).

And, as we say, so it goes.

You'll find on Page 24 of this issue a tribute to other women comics professionals, drawn by Wendy Pini. She and Maggie worked out a long list of names that could be "sparks" in the picture. "Please be sure, Maggie," Wendy said, "that you make it clear that those aren't the *only* talented women in the field — and please be sure no one *minds* being a 'spark.' "

And we just haven't managed to contact all the "sparks," and the negatives for the pages are being shot.

We hope no one minds having Wendy and us think highly of them — and we hope *you* don't mind an occasional error creeping in. But we *also* hope you'll help us to correct any errors you may find, because not one is deliberate.

Don + Maggie

COMING NEXT ISSUE:

As we prepare to go to press, we're already working on the Winter 1986 issue of ***Comics Collector***, which will go on sale in October.

The helpful people at Marvel Comics told us recently that they have a project in the works which *X-Men* fans will have to have. It's *The X-Factor*; it will be a new Marvel title starring former X-Men; and will feature some wild events we can't discuss right now. (We promised.)

But we *will* be able to tell you all about them and The X-Men and how *The X-Factor* came to be — in ***Comics Collector*** #10.

[We're also going to see what we can do to bring you the article many of you said you wanted to see: the story of two fans' hot creation, *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*.

And, of course, that's also the issue in which you can reach a nationwide, newsstand audience with a classfied ad for only 10¢ a word! We think *that's* the best deal yet!]

D + M

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3-8 up .80

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13 [Orian], 28 [Miller DD] 5.00
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144-49, 165-67, 175 2.50
150-154, 168-174 2.00
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LETTERS

All letters received by ***Comics Collector*** *will be considered for inclusion in "Letters," unless the letter-writer requests otherwise. To submit letters to this department directly, simply write to:*

Letters
Comics Collector
700 E. State St.
Iola, Wis. 54990

"It seems like Batman's history deserves a book, not a short article."

.....David Pulleyblank, Box 103, Denver, Iowa 50622 .....

I enjoyed the Summer 1985 issue of ***Comics Collector*** very much, especially the Batman articles. They were filled with interesting tidbits of information and were nicely illustrated (in color!) and presented.

Of all the classic super-heroes, Batman has the most fascinating history and evolution. Good as the article was, I wish it had been longer and more detailed. It seems like Batman's history deserves a book, not a short article.

I especially like reading behind-the-scenes accounts of the creative people and their work that went into the making of *Batman* and his adventures.

My favorite article of the magazine was Carl Cafarelli's "Same Bat-Time, Same Bat-Channel." I was in kindergarten when the *Batman* TV craze hit and vividly remember being infected with a bad case of Batman fever. I nagged my dad into taking me to the movie, which (like the TV show) was a big let-down. But the Batman craze of '66 was heady stuff for this impressionable seven-year-old. There was that neato photo on the cover of *Life*, a series of *Batman* bubble-gum cards with color paintings of awesome action scenes (unfortunately, I have just one of the 44 cards in the series; I used to have them all — talk about a lost childhood!), small rubber replicas of the Batman logo, records, and, of course, the comic books themselves.

It seemed like everyone was talking about Batman. Needless to say, it was this period that turned me into a hard-core Batman freak for life!

I also enjoyed your articles about comics collecting and conventions and Ron Goulart's "Funnies in the '40s" piece. I wish he had said more about Walt Kelly's complex personality. Oftentimes, the creator is at least as fascinating as his creations. Love those color reproductions!

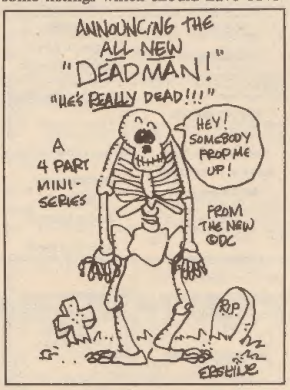
[There are several books on Batman — with one of the best being Michael L. Fleisher's ***The Encyclopedia of Comic Book Heroes****, Vol. 1 (1976, Collier Books).]*

"I have seen *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* on sale for almost twice that price."

....Conrad P. Felber, 1319 Rose Marie Ave., Sudbury, Ont. P3A 4E4 Canada ..

How about an article on the buying and selling of original comic art?

I feel that your price guide does provide a useful purpose and that it should be included in every issue. However, I do have one problem with it: You claim that it is continually updated, and yet some listings which should have obvi-



ous changes remain the same, especially when it comes to the price guide for direct-sale comics.

For example, in one of the advertisements featured in *CC* #8, *Cerebus* #21 is being sold for $50. Your guide, however, has it priced at a mere $2.50. This is obviously a mistake, even if you ignore that particular ad, because the scarcity of *Cerebus* #21 is a well-known fact and has even been noted recently by *Cerebus* creator Dave Sim in his *Swords of Cerebus* Vol. 6 introduction.

You may not agree that this particular comic book is now worth $50, but I don't think it is worth only $2.50.

The same can be said of most of the other issues of *Cerebus*, and similar arguments can be made about many of the other direct-sales titles — yes, even the first printing of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* #1, which you have listed at $40, while I have seen it on sale for almost twice that price.

While you're at it, you should also reconsider your *Swamp Thing* listing, which has Alan Moore's first issue as writer (#20) priced at only $2. Quite a bargain, considering most dealers are selling it for up to four times that value.

Trivial points?

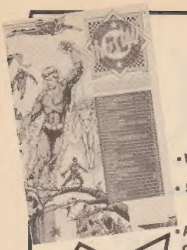
Perhaps — but a guide that does not reflect the true prices in the marketplace today is hardly worth including in your otherwise excellent publication. Don't forget, these are supposed to be "up-to-date values," according to your cover blurb.

[To begin with, you must keep in mind that prices vary radically on items from place to place. There are many items which are regionally higher or lower in price, depending on area demand.

What Alex Malloy attempts to offer is an averaging of values around the nation for issues in "near-mint" condition.

In the only other price guide information to come on the market recently, Robert M. Overstreet's ***The Comic Book Price Guide*** *#15, the "****mint****" value of* ***Swamp Thing*** *#20 is given as only $6. We strongly suspect the value on that issue will increase over the years — especially if collectors begin to invest in comics with outstanding writing as well as outstanding art.*

We were also careful to indicate that the prices on ***Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*** *#1 were still climbing — and that is still the case. That you find higher prices indicated is hardly surprising.]*



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Star Wars
Thing
Thor
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Vision & Scarlet Witch
Web of Spiderman
West Coast Avengers
X-Factor
X-Men
Any 1st issue (except reprints)
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Any mini series
Any movie adaptions

EPIC COMICS (by Marvel)
Alien Legion
Black Dragon
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Dreadstar
Ellquest
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Moonshadow
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Star Struck
Swashbucklers
Time Spirits
Any 1st issue
Any mini series

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Getalong Gang
Heathcliff
Muppet Babies
Peter Porker
Planet Terry
Royal Roy
Strawberry Shortcake
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Wally the Wizard
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Amethyst
Arion
Batman
Batman & the Outsiders
Best of DC Digest
Blue Devil
DC Challenge
DC Comics Presents
DC Graphic Novels
DC Universe: Crisis on Infinite Earths
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Fury of Firestorm
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Tex
V
Vigilante
Warlord
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Baxter reprints
Any mini series

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Badger
Elric
E-Man
First Graphic Novels
Grimjack
Jon Sable
Nexus
Shatter
Starslayer
Any 1st issue
Any mini series

ECLIPSE COMICS
Alien Encounters
Aztec Ace
Crossfire
DNAgents
Eclipse Graphic Novels
John Bolton's Halls of Horror
Masked Man
Miracle Man
Mr. Monster
Pressbutton
Sabre
Strange Days
Sun Runners
Tales of Terror
Zot
Any 1st issue
Any mini series

ARCHIE COMICS
Katy Keene
Mantech Robot Warriors
Mighty Crusaders
All Archie humor titles
Selected humor titles (send list)

COMICO COMICS
Elementals
Evangeline
Grendel
Mage
Next Man
Any 1st issue

RENEGADE PRESS
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Flaming Carrott
Ismet
Journey
Ms. Tree
Neil the Horse
Normalman
Robotech Masters
Robotech, The Macross Saga
Robotech, The New Generation
Valentino
Woodsmith
Any 1st issue

AARDVARK-VANAHEIM COMICS
Cerebus
Cerebus Jam
Swords of Cerebus

EAGLE COMICS
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Just Imagine
Kelvin Mace
Megalith
Mr. X
Myth Adventures
Pogo
Post Bros.
Probe
Quest Presents
Sentinels of Justice
Shadow Star
Shurikan
Southern Knights
Stig's Inferno
Tales of T.H.U.N.D.E.R.
Teenage Ninja Mutant Turtles
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Vortex
Wally Wood's Thunder Agents
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REVIEW

NOW YOU CAN COLLECT 'DANGERMOUSE'

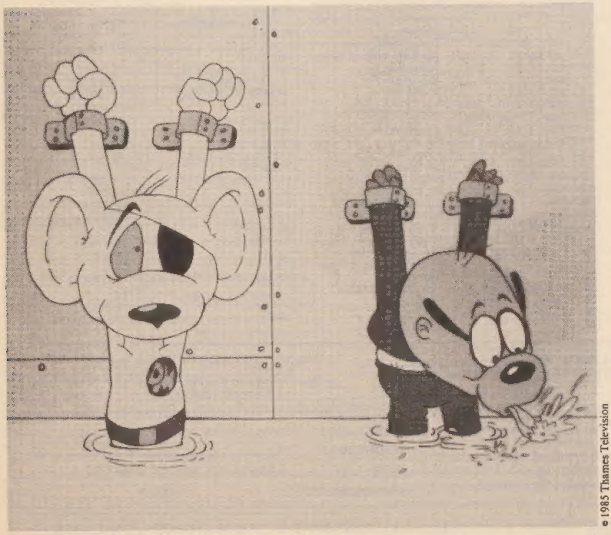
Dangermouse, Cassettes 1, 2, and 3. *Thorn EMI, 1370 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10019, 1984. $29.95 each.*

By Kim Metzger

You say you're interested in seeing the adventures of the White Wonder and Penfold, but there's just one little problem: You don't get Nickelodeon? If you have a VCR, your worries are over. Thorn EMI has released three *Dangermouse* videocassettes in America.

Even if you *do* receive Nickelodeon, you might want to pick up these videocassettes, because they present the cartoons as they originally appeared in England. Some segments were cut on cable; they've been restored on the cassette, and Stilleto retains his Italian accent. (To my mind, he sounds a lot like Chico Marx, which adds to the ridiculousness of his character.)

What adventures are on these cassettes? The first one has "Custard," in which Baron Greenback threatens to drown the world in dessert; "Close Encounters of the Absurd Kind," wherein DM tangles with aliens; "The Bad Luck Eye of the Little Yellow God" (one of the best titles I've come across in ages), the source of endless pitfalls for our heroes; and "The Trouble with Ghosts," which has Greenback tricking the intrepid pair into spending the night in a haunted castle.



© 1985 Thames Television

Penfold tries a desperate tactic to save himself and Dangermouse from the threat of "Custard," one of the stories on the first ***Dangermouse*** *videocassette.*

On Cassette #2 is "The Oddball Runaround," which concerns Dangermouse's efforts to retrieve a football containing vital secrets from the clutches of Baron Greenback and "The Return of Count Duckula," in which DM is pitted against (you guessed it) a vampire duck. It closes with "Public Enemy," my favorite of the longer adventures, with Dangermouse losing his memory and being tricked by Greenback into thinking he's a criminal. DM then goes on to rob and plunder only *too* well. (Although the package for this tape advertises a fourth adventure, "Who Stole the Bagpipes?" that episode was not on the copy I received.)

On Cassette #3: "Chicken Run," concerns Greenback's plot to create giant chickens. "The Four Tasks of Dangermouse" sends Dangermouse gathering the ingredients to a special formula for Greenback. (If he fails, Penfold will die.) It's in "The Four Tasks" that DM meets Count Duckula for the first time. "Planet of the Cats," a *Planet of the Apes* take-off, sends DM and Penfold into the future, where earth is run by cats. "The Dream Machine" — a nightmare for our heroes — rounds out the adventures on the third tape.

Each tape is of high quality, both in terms of picture and sound. In fact, the first two are marked as being recorded in hi-fi. The first two also have special "intermissions" between each cartoon, during which the announcer is given a few minutes to shine — and shine he does, whether it's to ask if anyone knows where his bicycle is or to fend off an attack from Nero, Greenback's pet caterpillar. The third cassette, alas, has only one of these intermissions. The reduction is a sad mistake, in my view.

In all, however, these videocassettes are definitely worth their cost and will provide hours of enjoyment to young and old alike.

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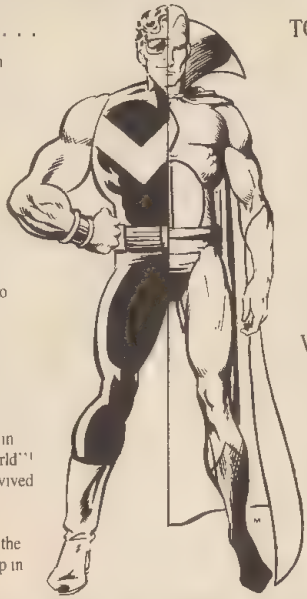

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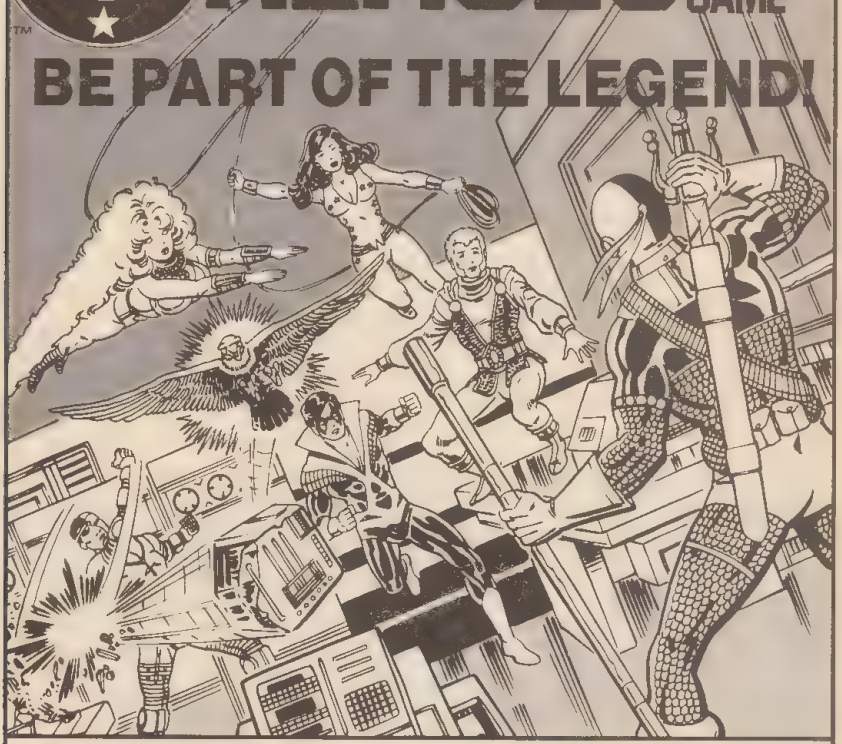

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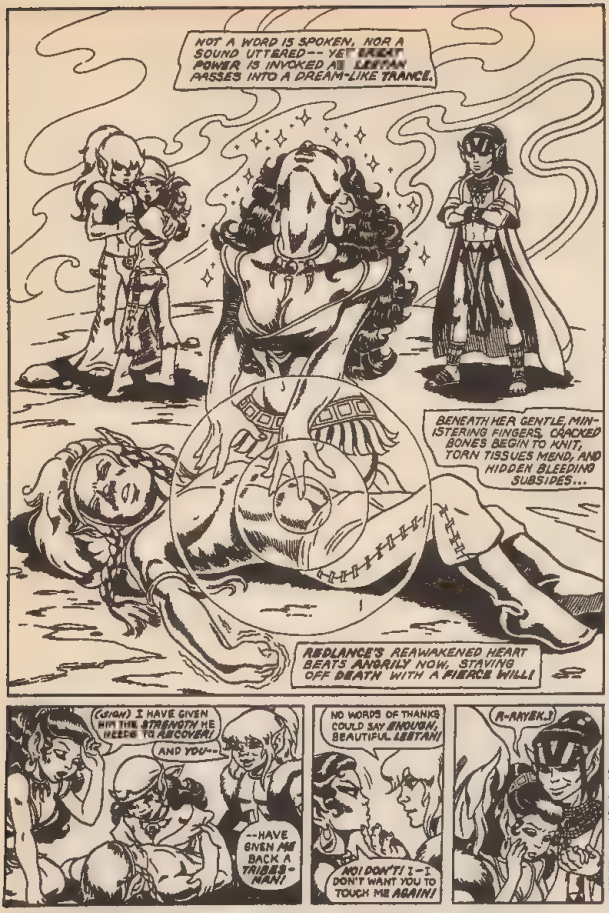
WOMEN, COMICS, AND ELFQUEST

By Wendy Pini

When I go to the Marvel offices to deliver pages of art or to break down the next few *Elfquest* reprint issues with Mary Jo Duffy, I sometimes get that same, queer feeling I used to get in high school — I guess everybody's had it — that uncertainty about one's status in the pack, that "am I in with the in-crowd?" anxiety.

It reminds me how much a creature of habit and conditioning I am. But it also makes me wonder if men and women in the work force, including myself, will ever rise above the pecking order of the pack system or if, indeed, they really want to. There is safety in the known, in the established norm. High school, for all its banality, prepares one for life in a way which can neither be forgotten nor escaped. I suspect that most people are what they are in high school and only continue to become more of what they are throughout their lives. I was an outsider. I still am.

Richard and Wendy Pini met as fans and became professionals.



It was in ***Elfquest*** *#2 that Leetah first showed her healing skills. The Pinis examined the aspects of such abilities, with Leetah sharing the pain to heal it.*

High school and comic books: The mentality of one is ripe for the consumption of the other. In an industry which aims its product primarily at adolescent males, attitudinal changes toward the stereotyping of both male and female comics characters can only be hard won through long, yet subtle, combat. Many of those battles will be fought, unsung, by women — as artists, writers, editors and consumers. Inroads will be made quietly. Flamboyance is, for the most part, the province of the rooster, not the hen.

But sometimes the greatest changes are brought about by stealth, rather than by overt aggression.

The nature of the comic-book audience has changed over the past 20 years as much as has the medium itself. The most profitable change, artistically and commercially, has been the growing number of women, of all ages, who have swelled the audiences of such enduring series as *The X-Men*, *Star Wars*, and *Teen Titans* and have helped make the relatively new *Alpha Flight* a hit.

Elfquest boasts the highest percentage of female readers of any comics series currently on the market. I say this with ill-concealed pride and the results of a wide-sweeping demographic survey in hand. *Elfquest*'s audience is, in fact, almost equally divided between male and female readers in their late teens and early 20s. Whether this trend will continue with *Elfquest*'s newsstand distribution as a Marvel/Epic reprint remains to be seen, but I suspect the pattern will hold.

"We created a market that did not previously exist for a look and a style of story-telling that was old-fashioned and yet had never been seen before."

Tentative analyses and simplistic generalizations made by the industry and the fan press aside, what appeals to female comics readers is whatever turns them on, and *that* territory is still largely unexplored — even by women themselves.

It is a commonly and not incorrectly held view that women gravitate to stories which contain a high degree of "soap opera." Young girls are especially interested in relationships and in emotional interactions. They like stories about family-type groups. They are also attracted to slightly dangerous, youthful, androgynous male characters who, much to any hard-core Jungian philosopher's delight, would seem to represent the female "animus" (or animating motive). *Elfquest* fills that bill on all counts, not because I deliberately set out to attract a huge female following, but because lurking not so deep within my own psyche is that same high-school outsider who — horrors! — is a typical female adolescent.

"Lurking not so deep within my own psyche is that same high-school outsider who — horrors! — is a typical female adolescent."

One creates, after all, for an audience of one. But happily, times have changed so much that boys are now showing interest in those things that have been traditionally regarded as "girl stuff."

From my own experience and observations I have learned that many girls, and even women, spend time fantasizing, not just about connecting with males, but about *being* males. I remember discovering Michael Moorcock's "Elric" stories when I was 16. It mattered not a whit that the character was male; I identified because Elric expressed all the self-centered melancholy and anguish that most teenagers go through.

I *was* Elric mentally when I read the stories. I drew him, I wrote about him, I even corresponded with Moorcock and vented philosophical analyses of the

character. Poor Michael! It didn't dawn on me until much later that I was obsessed with my own animus. At age 16 I was simply thoroughly turned on, and, because Elric was an effeminate character, it was that much easier to project myself into him.

Had he been a muscular Conan type, I doubt that identification would ever have taken place.

At about the same time I discovered Moorcock's writings, I began collecting Marvel Comics.

"I began collecting Marvel Comics. I started with 'The Avengers' and instantly loved Hawkeye, the loud-mouthed misfit rebel."

I started with *The Avengers* and instantly loved Hawkeye, the loud-mouthed misfit rebel. Because the distinctly male slant of the writing and art prejudiced me, my attitude toward The Wasp and The Scarlet Witch was just as sexist as that of any of the male Avengers.

I felt no obligation to those dippy female characters, did not even look for hidden depths in them, and continued to identify with the stronger, more interesting males. What teenager does not fantasize about being strong and effective? My experience was and probably still is shared by many girls. Young, impressionable, insecure: We become, vicariously, male heroes.

In one sense women's imaginations are more versatile than men's: To women, androgyny is not taboo. When a man dresses as a woman, he is, to straight society, ridiculous if not repellent. But when a woman dresses as a man, she does not seem to carry the same shameful stigma. The man risks being branded a wimp. The woman may be regarded as chic. This makes some women able to project themselves fearlessly into a male physique and frame of mind.

In 1982 Diane Venora, star of *Wolfen* (one of my favorite movies) played *Hamlet* off Broadway. She cut a dashing, persuasive figure in cropped hair, military uniform, and boots. By contrast, Robert Preston in *Victor/Victoria*, for all the poignance and gentle humor of his role, looked far more ridiculous in drag than did Julie Andrews.

Women have their own dignity which men, portraying them in any medium, seldom seem to be able to capture. Women, however, do not seem to be objects of derision even when aping male mannerisms and thought patterns. The deep-rooted misogyny of our society sustains the imbalance of image between the sexes — the male persona (the role he assumes to display conscious intentions to himself and others) is more respectable than the female — and those women with low self esteem help to perpetuate it just as they help perpetuate bad pornography.

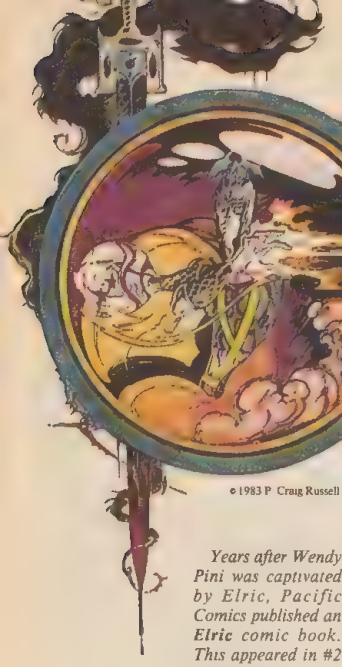
© 1978 Wendy and Richard Pini (WaRP Graphics)

*Elfquest first appeared in **Fantasy Quarterly** #1 from "Independent Publishers Syndicate." The issue's production values were poor, but with **Elfquest**'s steadily increasing popularity, its price is steadily increasing.*

Many women buy into the supposed permanence of male-created female stereotypes because it is easier for them to accept someone else's definition of who they are than to discover their own identities. Women are conditioned by parents and peers to fear loneliness; there is no more lonely path imaginable than that which leads to the truth of one's own self.

Chris Claremont once said to me, "The reason why women often write better male characters than men write female characters is because women are taught not only to think for themselves, but to think for men, too."

Considering that, statistically, employment throughout the entertain-



Years after Wendy Pini was captivated by Elric, Pacific Comics published an ***Elric*** *comic book. This appeared in #2 (August 1983).*

ment industry is roughly 75% male to only 25% female, it is easy to understand why the increasing number of women breaking into the comics field do need to think like men in order to compete.

It is still commercially necessary for women to focus on those things that will be interest male consumers, whether in story-telling, art style, or development of merchandising properties.

Given that the scope of the types of comics stories which are traditionally interesting to men is still rather limited, women now have a tremendous opportunity to enrich the medium with their insights and to promote new levels of understanding between the sexes. It is already happening, subtly, but still within the boundaries of the system.

Who, after all, wants the "mission impossible?" Who wants to be a crusader? No man or woman I know. Pioneers must be willing to be lonely.

Inertia is a ponderous thing. Having been pioneers of sorts, Richard and I, for all our knee-jerk "somebody *do* something!" reactions, are as shy of sticking our necks out as anyone. If we keep doing it, it's probably because we've rolled into a certain inertia of our own. One day we'll get off the merry-go-round and wonder how we ever rode it together so long.

Hey, it's only comics, after all.

Female comics characters, as portrayed by men, are sometimes seen only as vehicles of suffering. They exist to be put into peril and to agonize for men's amusement. Critics assert, rightly, that hostility to women has reached such perverse proportions in certain comics that women are often represented only as objects of rape or other forms of degradation. As it is now conceived, *The Savage Sword of Conan* is an outstanding example, and sales are reportedly healthy. But, whether the hostility is overt or merely the result of complacency, the representation of true femaleness, organic and psychological, has yet to come into its own in the graphic story-telling medium.

No matter what ideological gymnastics are required of women as they attempt to fit into an ever-more-rapidly moving technological society, the one act that remains intrinsically womanly is birth. Men can never really know what birth is like. Many can't even see it as a painful-but-fulfilling experience. Many men have great paranoia about retaining their physical identities, and the distortion of pregnancy coupled with the messiness of birth is more than some can cope with.

Consider: All splatter movies are made by men. Horror is gore and dismemberment. Consider too: Along with the mounting trend toward "goo" in horror films, many special effects monsters resemble embryos or aborted fetuses. *It's Alive, Prophecy, Humanoids From the Deep* — the examples are there.

And birth images themselves are given horrific stature, as in the chest-burster scene in *Alien* or in the monstrous birth of *The Manitou.*

This is not coincidence. As male-dominated society grows increasingly coldly technological, the biological process of birth and death become at best remote, at worst gross and shameful. In the end it may be left to women to guard whatever remains of the human in humanity.

Whenever men depict birth in the comics, it seems as though the woman is always flat on her back, in extreme agony; there is usually associated violence or tension. The laboring woman has to be moved from point A to point B while the villain attacks, so her urgency is coupled with the anxiety of everyone whose life is in danger at the villain's hands. While this works dramatically, it is an overused device which portrays pregnant women as pains-in-the-neck. And the hero, whether it's his baby or not, is usually as fuddle-headed about it as Ricky Ricardo was during the birth of Little Ricky.

When Stan Lee and Jack Kirby brought Sue Richards to her "confinement" with Franklin in the '60s, the physical aspects of the birth were not dealt with at all. Yet it was a daring move for superhero comics at the time. In a *Killraven* story and more recently in Sabre, birth was represented fairly graphically with some focus on the woman's strained reactions to labor and, of course, with the aforementioned attendant violence.

It was with a certain self-consciousness that I approached the birth scene in *Elfquest* #20. Aware of what had been done before, I chose to portray the baby's birth as naturalistically as possible, without trauma. The mother was shown sitting up, which is how most women prefer to do it to take advantage of gravity. The father was right there with her, and the children were watching with fascination. The scene was a joyful one, and, to the best of my knowledge, birth has never been handled quite this way in American comics. In addition, male elves can "lock-send" with their mates — that is, communicate telepathically in such a way that the male can actually experience the feelings of the birthing female. So the scene can be said to have added significance, done as it was from a woman's point of view.

Not so very long ago society ostracized women who refused motherhood. Now childlessness is an acceptable choice, but society still has difficulty embracing women who reject their other stereotypical roles: healer, nurturer, or mediator. The new breed of tough, independent super-heroine that has emerged in various comics titles over the past few years, when not handled carefully, resembles in speech and mannerisms a man with breasts rather than a truly feminine woman.

As pointed out earlier, this does not necessarily make the character ludicrous; in fact, this breasted man is easy to work with in the violent super-hero genre. She is uncomplicated. She takes her lumps alongside her male counterparts. But just to reassure the readers who represent society's standards (and

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society *must* be reassured) that she is, indeed, female, she is usually given some sort of romantic involvement which enables her nurturing side to show forth.

In some cases a fresh approach is taken. Ororo mothered Kitty Pryde early on in their relationship. And, though Mockingbird sparred several bruising rounds with Hawkeye (a daring scene in which man and woman were equal in skill if not in physical strength) she later whisked him off to the Poconos for a honeymoon.

While I cannot deny the high entertainment value of these pairings, the message, overall, remains that the heroine who stands alone is not whole. Female readers cannot help but absorb this message, and many cannot help but buy it. A monthly dose of it from 80% of the titles on the stands, including alternative comics, has a numbing effect even on the most enlightened mind. True alternatives seem impossible. They are not. But they seem so.

Why do women read male-oriented comics? Partly because that is what is available. Options are currently limited. But there is another reason, the kind of secret vice that one takes a flashlight under the covers at night to indulge. I hope I will be forgiven for spilling the beans, but some women actually ***enjoy*** seeing male characters injured or helpless, because they find emotional empathy with the pain to be stimulating. Sounds kinky? Maybe. But not only is it harmless, it may spring out of that same well from which a woman draws compassion and the desire to ease others' pain.

"Some women actually enjoy seeing male characters injured or helpless, because they find emotional empathy with the pain to be stimulating."

I wonder sometimes if women don't spend their lives waiting for explosions, for something cathartic to come along and blast them into a new state of being.

I used to go into rages as a girl because I didn't like where and what I was. But I wasn't ready to go somewhere else. If I wanted to draw something and hadn't yet developed the skill to do it, I wanted to explode. I wanted (figuratively) to be blasted apart to find that vision. Even now I feel that way at times.

That is the artist's point of view, but there are parallels in other areas of life. A girl refused a place on the soccer team by a repressive school system must want to put her first through a wall in frustration. But she doesn't dare, because aggressive, violent females are too intimidating and seldom get their way in polite society. For such a thwarted individual, fantasy can be a form of escape — and violent fantasy can be cathartic.

"Master of the psychic invasion, Chris Claremont delights in shocking his eager readers with the mental torment of his characters."

Women as well as men are inspired by the "suffering hero" image. If the hero is down and out, the female reader feels sympathetic — drawn to the pain with a desire to make it better.

At the same time she herself wants to be the recipient of that attention, to be down and out and to have somene want to make it better for *her*. She projects herself into two roles, the healer and the healed. Perhaps she is also the injurer — Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu all in one. The Dominatrix is a recurrent image in comics and a popular one with readers of either sex. Power is the name of the game: power to give life or to take it away, power to be the center of attention, power to explode.

Wendy Pini appeared with other Red Sonja look-alikes in convention presentations with Frank Thorne (as "The Wizard"), artist of the Red Sonja comic book. This photo was taken in 1977.

There is a dignity to the physically wounded hero that is not accorded the heroine who goes through mental pain. Art reflects life, and life is not fair.

A woman might go through a great deal of anguish because she is being sexually harassed at the office. Hers is no less a battle than man against men with sword or spear — but her wounds are not so obvious or so easily bound, and she is not necessarily hailed for her courage.

When a woman draws attention to herself, she also draws attention to her so-called sisters, and they become uncomfortable. Subterfuge is a survival tactic, *a la* The Invisible Girl, and that requires a low profile. Real women's everyday triumphs and defeats are most often in the attitudinal area, not in hand-to-hand combat as depicted in the comics.

When The She-Hulk trashes a villain, a female reader can take it as symbolic of an ideological victory, but can she really identify in any other way with that kind of broad (pun acknowledged) violence?

How often are women arrested for acts of physical aggression? Not nearly as frequently as men are. Women's battles are usually cerebral, but just as brutal as any brawl.

The nobly wounded (as opposed to the tortured or abused) heroine is seldom seen in comics.

Red Sonja has taken some cuts in her day — in fact I used to take advantage of my appendix scar to illustrate that point when we were doing the "Red Sonja and The Wizard Show" at conventions years ago. And the Black Widow, under Gerry Conway's care, went through the ringer right along with Daredevil.

But nowadays heroines seem to be getting wounded psychically rather than physically. Master of the psychic invasion, Chris Claremont delights in shocking his eager readers with the mental torment of his characters.

Yet he is conscientious enough that these writhings have symbolic validity. What he seems to be saying with Ororo,

bizarre as she is now, is that the character is going through an explosion, suffering to reach a new state of being — like a birth. Birth as explosion. Women crave explosions. *X-Men* has an "X-traordinarily" high female readership. They are turned on. See the pattern?

I don't think men are comfortable with the thought of loss of identity through catharsis. Maybe that's why they depict birth as agonizing, because from their point of view it is necessarily an explosion, rather than a giving or an issuing.

How else does the suffering hero appeal to women? Young girls start reading super-hero comics at just about the time they are discovering boys and their own sexuality. They're a little bit excited, and a little bit afraid.

In their fantasies, if the hero is helpless and hurt, he is harmless — approachable. This truth is dealt with symbolically in the otherwise wretched British film *The Company of Wolves*. Only after Rosalie shoots the wolf-man is he safe to touch. And oh, do the young girls want to touch the hero! They empathize. They, too, are helpless.

Some of the most romantic, lyrical scenes in comics concern the hero's fall. When Alicia Masters let the Silver Surfer recover on her apartment couch from The Thing's blow, there was certainly subtle erotic interaction percolating beneath the surface of their conversation. The scene was both tender and a turn-on.

"Woman as healer" is a famous cliche. But underneath may be "woman as sexually awakening and vulnerable individual." We brought this out in our Elfquest novel, *Journey to Sorrow's End*. We examined Leetah's nature as a healer and tied it in with her sexuality. She had to make herself immensely vulnerably to go inside a person, find the injury, and work her healing magic on it. She had to share the pain to a certan extent. It drained her. So in compensation she could choose when to release forces in herself that gave her great physical pleasure.

One assumes that a healer must know the secret sources of both pleasure and pain in the body. Leetah was balanced between them.

During the scene in which Rayek helped Leetah heal Cutter (*Elfquest* #16) there was a strong undercurrent of the type of eroticism I call *Liebestod* — love and death.

Women find this terribly stimulating, yet it takes cold control to portray such melodrama without overdoing the mush. The Japanese use this type of thematic device in their romance, science fiction, and samurai comics, sometimes to an excess that even I, insatiable as I am, cannot tolerate.

American comics artists and writers are more reserved in their approach to this kind of all-or-nothing interaction between characters. The two most potent forces in human existence, sex and death, make dynamic dramatic story-telling when carefully blended. Comics which contain a heavy element of violence are more appealing to women when the aftermath of brutality is acknowledged with some kind of human empathy.

Obviously *Elfquest* contains many elements that have attracted and held a strong female readership throughout the duration of the series. But it has also attracted an equally devoted male following, and that says more about the changing times, perhaps, than about *Elfquest* itself.

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"Richard and I met through the letters pages of 'Silver Surfer' #5."

Marriages have resulted from elf-fan meeting elf-fan. Richard and I smile at the poetic justice; we met through the letters pages of *Silver Surfer* #5, and why not? The Surfer had and has all the makings of the kind of vulnerable hero girls go for. I did. It wasn't fate. It was glands.

Whenever John Buscema and I meet, which isn't often enough, since I like the man and admire his work so much, he always busts my chops on the subject of women artists.

John asserts that women cannot draw truly masculine men, but that men can draw women perfectly well. There is no debating with him, because it's not really important to him, but it touches a nerve in me. Having been an animation-style cartoonist for more than eight years, I've almost forgotten many of the rules of anatomy that I've been breaking so merrily. And my male elves are nothing if not pretty.

It is some consolation that WaRP Graphics does not receive letters from male fans complaining that the elves are effeminate. I have somehow managed to create believable male characters who do not trigger prejudicial responses in the men who read *Elfquest*. Though they could have been better drawn in some cases, the human men that I represented in the series were fairly rugged looking, so I did not shy away from tackling the artistic problem of rendering masculine figures. But I can do better.

Men deserve it; they're worth looking at and they're worth a truthful line on paper. So are women, you hear me, John? No more men with breasts!

Whatever the reason for male acceptance of my art style, I believe that *Elfquest*'s audience was *conditioned* by Richard's and my pig-headed belief that

our way was not just the right way to do the story, it was the *only* way.

The fan press jokes and says no one will ever figure out why *Elfquest* made it — it had everything going against it.

But quite simply, we created a market that did not previously exist for a look and a style of story-telling that was old-fashioned and yet had never been seen before. That bodes well for newcomers striving to tell their stories or to express their artistic styles in this highly competitive field, for the independent press is now as difficult to break into as the mainstream ever was. An audience will warm up to something new and different if the creators persevere. But some words to men and women, boys and girls alike: The quality of the work *must* merit the readers' time and money. Do it for yourself, but make yourself a member of your own audience. There is no other way to evaluate your own progress.

To women in particular, my only advice, which most of you have probably figured out already, is to channel your compulsion to meet others' expectations into the driving force behind your own creativity. Women are perfectionists, partly because of performance anxiety, partly because they are terribly competitive and don't like to be caught napping, but mostly because they put so much of themselves into what they do. Call it love, if it must be sentimentalized. The talent of women is an active volcano that the comics industry is just now beginning to explore. I'm enjoying the fireworks that I already see.

AN INTERVIEW WITH WENDY PINI

TARGET DATE FOR THE 'ELFQUEST' MOVIE IS 1988

By John Wooley

One of the true success stories in the field of fantasy is that of *Elfquest*, which began life as a small-run, black-and-white comic book in 1978. Unhappy with the quality of the first issue, creators Wendy and Richard Pini borrowed money and published a second issue themselves. The husband-and-wife team soon knew they had something. As Wendy says, "it just began to snowball from there." Circulation grew as word got around, and it wasn't long before *Elfquest* was established as a major hit.

Along the way, there have been color reprints (carried by the two largest bookstore chains in the nation), a novel from Berkley Books, and such spinoff material as a role-playing game, a fan club, T-shirts, and pewter figurines of the characters who populate the *Elfquest* saga. The story of an elf tribe's continuing adventures has also inspired near-fanatical devotion on the parts of many of its fans, whose numbers are now in the hundreds of thousands.

Perhaps it's only natural, then, that *Elfquest* would be making it to theater screens someday, and that day is rapidly approaching. In this interview, Wendy Pini — who draws, scripts, and co-plots *Elfquest* — talks of current plans for the *Elfquest* movie, plans that are being finalized even as you read this.

JW: How did the idea of making a movie of *Elfquest* come about?

WP: It was there from the very beginning. *Elfquest* was conceived as a film before it was conceived as a comic, really. That's why the characters are drawn in animation style.

Elfquest received a lot of criticism in the early years, and right on up until now, from critics who couldn't accept the cartoonish, "too-cute" appearance of the characters. They simply refused to look deeper into the story and see what those symbols meant. But *Elfquest* is designed the way it's designed so an animator can look at it and say, *I* can do this," which is exactly what's happening

with the studios we've been showing it to. The first thing they say is, "well, your characters are highly animatable." Of course they are. I've designed them to be.

I want to see them move. I *have* seen them move. Some animators have worked up some pencil tests that have just blown Richard's and my mind, because it's one thing to see them on paper with incredibly lively drawings. It's another thing altogether to see them *move.*

JW: I assume you want full animation.

WP: Absolutely. What we're trying to do is reinvent the wheel with animation. We're not going to go for a lot of razzle-dazzle special effects or computer animation.

JW: No rotoscope?

WP: No rotoscope. This is going to be straight, on-the-board, back-to-basics animation. We're not looking to dazzle the public with something they've never seen before. What we're looking to do is to remind the public that animation is a good storytelling medium, and when you have a solid story and animation that complements it rather than overwhelms it, you're going to have a classic film. And that's what we're aiming at.

JW: Did the studios contact you, or did you contact the studios?

WP: In the beginning, we were with Nelvana in Toronto, Canada. They had contacted us and said they wanted to do it. We were thrilled because they had the best quality animation as far as we were concerned. We'd have gone to them if they hadn't come to us.

But they just sort of jerked us around for a couple of years. Their first feature film, which they were finishing up at the time, *Rock & Rule,* bombed miserably during its premiere. I'm not saying it was a bad film from an animation standpoint — it was exquisite animation — but the storytelling was a complete failure. I mean, they were editing it right up to the last minute and they didn't even know what they were after with the story.

We didn't mind this. We knew their reputation for bad storytelling, but we didn't mind because we felt that if they were willing to work closely with us on the story, I mean, how could they lose? They *had* the animation. They had the pen.

But they weren't willing to work closely with us at all. They wanted us to turn over the property, say "Bye-bye, visit us a couple of times and we'll show you around," and that's that. It just did not work out. So, after that, we went scouting around for studios who would be willing to essentially let us be the executive producers and co-directors.

Let me singularize that. Richard is involved in the financing and business end. The artistic control would be mine. That's my job. Each studio that we are considering now is willing to give us that input and that control. My function will be as art director, co-director of the script and so forth, and key animator. I would provide the key scenes and then the animators would fill them in.

JW: It takes a lot of clout to work a deal like that, doesn't it?

WP: It takes money. And fortunately, we're in that position right now.

JW: By the time you left Nelvana, your circulation had grown and I assume you had more leverage.

WP: Oh, yes. Losing Nelvana was not a blow to us, because we were ready to go on from there. It did not put that much sand in our gears at all. We just simply went scouting for other studios right away.

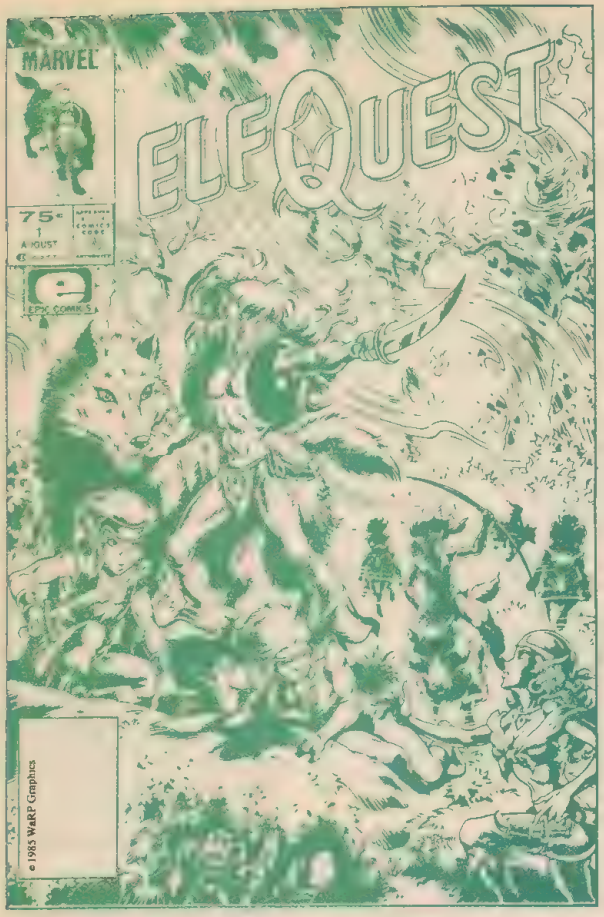
JW: When do you think the movie will be out?

WP: Our most optimistic projections is three years for the release of the film. And the timing would be terrific, because Marvel (Comics) plans to reprint *Elfquest* as a color series in spring of '85. If all goes well, their reprints will take about three years. So, ideally, the film could come out then and the audience would be hungry for the next *Elfquest* thing, because through the Marvel reprints we're hoping to triple our audience.

The newsstand is the one market we've never been able to reach. There are only about 3000 direct-sales shops in the country, and that's where people have been getting the black-and-white comics, either there or through subscriptions. But where a lot of people have been discovering *Elfquest,* people who don't ordinarily read comics, has been in Waldenbooks or B. Dalton's with our color volumes. That was another groundbreaker, because Waldenbooks and B. Dalton's were very leery of putting what was essentially a glorified comic book on the stands. But when they saw how it sold, they even began to be interested in other titles besides *Elfquest.*

So, because *Elfquest* came in first and was successful, now things like *Beowulf* and *Lightrunner* can come in and have their shot. I hope that trend continues, and I'm very proud *Elfquest* was the first. In Europe, graphic novels are the

(Top to Bottom:) WaRP Graphics' own printing of the first issue; the first volume of collected stories; the last issue (a collection of miscellany which is not part of the projected Marvel series); a sample back cover, featuring two of the Elf band.



This is the cover on Marvel Comics' first issue of ***Elfquest****. For the first time, WaRP Graphics' elves are reaching the newsstand audience Wendy and Richard Pini had in mind from the beginning.*

norm, but here in America they're just getting started.

JW: You've said that you plan to use full animation in the film. Isn't that going to cost a lot more?

WP: Well, it costs more in time than in money. Full animation, limited animation, whatever, it's more the time factor than the money factor. Animation is still a much cheaper way to go than live action.

JW: Then why can't we have good Saturday morning cartoons on television?

WP: You don't even want to *talk* about the factories that crank out the Saturday morning cartoons. They are not animation studios. They are, you know . . . *ciphers.* I can't say enough negative things about them.

JW: Were you influenced by any television cartoons?

WP: *Jonny Quest,* which was designed by Doug Wildey and came out in 1964, was a tremendous influence on me. I was a tremendous *Jonny Quest* fan. I could quote you all the titles and some of the dialogue. And I had the great pleasure of meeting Doug Wildey a couple of years ago, and I've been corresponding with him since. He's very much behind *Elfquest* and very eager to see it become a film, and I'm just thrilled because it's like a full circle. He was so very inspirational to me, and to have him pat me on the back and say "go for it" is really exciting.

Jonny Quest was a very noble experiment. It sort of elevated the art of TV animation about as far as it could go. It was limited animation, but it was extremely expensive and it did not go over well with the public. The public wasn't ready for it.

JW: Originally, it was a prime-time show. But it later reran on Saturday mornings. A couple of years ago, when it ran network on Saturday mornings, many of the more violent scenes were cut.

WP: Yes, they sanitized it completely.

JW: How do you feel about that "sanitization"? Not just with *Jonny Quest,* but also with the Warner Bros. cartoons and even the newer stuff?

WP: Oh, I think it's vile. I think it's vile. I don't think they have any idea how children's minds work at all. I think the more you take away the effects of violence, the less you show how violence can really *hurt* someone, the more detached from reality the observer becomes, whether it's a child or an adult.

I think it's a completely vile practice, and I think it's hypocritical as hell. And I've written letters of complaint to networks until my hand's about to fall off. Richard and I both have. I remember when Filmation brought out a thing called *Black Star,* which is apparently still running in reruns. Richard and I sat down, and we wrote a letter, and we said, "Don't you realize that all the corny special effects in the world, all the hypocritical allusions to extant fantasy like *Trobbits,* for God's sake, are not going to nourish a child's mind one bit? If you are going to tell a fantasy story, you've got to realize that fantasy is truth in symbols. You've got to *feed their minds.* Don't just give them batwing dragons and light sabers with no motivation, no good dialogue, no good direction, no plot to speak of whatsoever. Don't rip kids off."

We got no reply, of course. We sent it not only to the director of the show, but also to the children's programming department. But it was a drop in the bucket. It didn't do any good at all, but at least we launched our protest.

JW: You began a trend with your suc-

cessful self-publishing venture. You started another trend when your comic-book reprints were picked up by the major bookstore chains. Do you hope to start another trend with the *Elfquest* movie?

WP: Absolutely. What we're hoping is that, if nothing else, *Elfquest* will be a renaissance in storytelling for animation. All the major animated films that have come out in the past 10 years have more or less bombed at the boxoffice, or only made back a little more than they cost. *The Fox and the Hound* was a success. It didn't make *much* money, but it was dubbed a success. It was good storytelling. *The Last Unicorn* did fairly well. It was pretty sophisticated storytelling for an animated film, and I think it's the most recent feature film that I admire. I think it was a very noble effort and I think the script was good, and if the animation had been full and a little less cheap, it would have been a classic, I think.

But what we're hoping for with *Elfquest,* which will have full animation along with a mature but not overblown script, is that we'll bring in a wide general audience, that parents will feel comfortable taking their children to see it. We will be frank about the eroticism, we will be frank about the violence, but in perspective. We want to show the results of each. I mean, you can't hide your child's head in the sand any more. They see too much on TV and read too much in newspapers to believe that the world is pretty and all right. It's not, and I think that *Elfquest* reflects a lot of the tension of our times today. It's a fantasy for the time.

JW: What have you done to prepare yourself for filmmaking?

WP: Richard and I are reading like crazy. We recently made a trip to the Anaheim (Calif.) area for the World Science Fiction Convention, and we stopped off in Hollywood and bought books and books and books on animated feature film making and how to write a screenplay, and we're just loading our heads with all kinds of information.

I think that we both have pretty good instincts for visual storytelling, but there's an awfully big difference between telling a story cinematically and telling it in the linear fashion you use in a comic book. Even though a comic book looks like movies on paper, it's quite different. People say, "Well, you've always done the storyboard in your eight years of working on *Elfquest,* by doing all 20 issues of the book." Hardly. We're approaching it from an entirely different angle. The dialogue has to be different, the pacing of the scenes has to be different, and — once again — we're learning as we go. But fortunately, we'll be working with some really good people.

At the start of 1985, Wendy and Richard Pini sent out this New Year's letter to their friends.

JW: One of the most impressive things about the *Elfquest* story is how you've beaten the odds so many times.

WP: I think a lot of what's helped us is the fans. *Elfquest* has always sold itself by word of mouth. We've hardly had to do any advertising at all. The fans went into Waldenbooks and B. Dalton's and bought, and then other people who weren't fans started discovering it and bought. The incredible interest in the film the fans have been showing has been a good motivation for us and the studios, because we've done surveys and so forth and we can show them figures that say, "You really ought to . . ."

You couple strong characterizations with a strong plot and I really believe you're going to get a following, because the fans tend to gravitate to a story that has a real strong vision behind it. They can tell when they're getting garbage, and they can tell when they're getting something that the artists and writers believe in.

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE HITS OF THE YEAR!

COMIC • BOOK READERS PICKED THEIR FAVORITES OF 1984 WHICH ONES DID YOU COLLECT?

In the May 17, 1985, issue of ***The Comics Buyer's Guide*** appeared the results of the first full-scale comics fan awards. Ballots ran in almost all comics published in America — and other ballots were distributed by comics shops, comics clubs, fanzines, and the like.

A total of 5,909 ballots were counted — the largest comics fan voting turn-out ever. The results offer you a chance to see whether there are exciting comics available that you've been missing.

COMICS FANS' FAVORITES FOR 1984

RESULTS OF COMICS READERS' SURVEY ANNOUNCED BY 'COMICS BUYER'S GUIDE'

FAVORITE EDITOR

Shooter won. Wolfman a very close second

Jim Shooter *624*
Marv Wolfman *623*
Mike Gold *536*
Dennis O'Neil *383*
Ann Nocenti *359*
Mark Gruenwald *328*
Archie Goodwin *322*
Len Wein *263*
Roy Thomas *185*
Danny Fingeroth *141*
Karen Berger *137*
Carl Potts *127*
Julius Schwartz *118*
Al Milgrom *115*
Mike Carlin *113*
Alan Gold *105*
Dick Giordano *100*

FAVORITE WRITER

Chris Claremont and Alan Moore led the field

Chris Claremont *1041*
Alan Moore *871*
Marv Wolfman *707*
John Byrne *660*
Walter Simonson *168*
Jim Shooter *144*
Howard Chaykin *143*
Roger Stern *132*
Roy Thomas *130*
Mike Grell *114*
Louise Simonson *109*

FAVORITE ARTIST

John Byrne, George Perez took third of votes

John Byrne *1089*
George Perez *1055*
Bill Sienkiewicz *371*
John Romita Jr. *238*
Howard Chaykin *199*
Walter Simonson *146*
Paul Smith *111*
Mike Grell *108*

FAVORITE COVER

First offset issue of 'New Teen Titans' was winner

New Teen Titans #1 *274*
Secret Wars #1 *203*
New Mutants #18 *95*
Superman #400 *95*

FAVORITE COMIC BOOK

'X-Men' won; 'Titans,' 'Swamp Thing' scored high

X-Men 906
New Teen Titans/Tales of the Teen Titans 577
Saga of the Swamp Thing 487
Fantastic Four 313
Alpha Flight 271
Amazing Spider-Man 239
American Flagg! 196
Jon Sable, Freelance 159
New Mutants 150
Cerebus 120
G.I. Joe 115
Secret Wars 114
Thor 113
Legion of Super-Heroes/Tales of the Legion 110

FAVORITE STORY

'Teen Titans' took top two places

"The Judas Contract" *290*
Marv Wolfman and George Perez
(*Tales of the Teen Titans* #42-44, *Annual* #3)
Wolfman and Perez, editors
"Who Is Donna Troy?" *237*
Marv Wolfman and George Perez
(*The New Teen Titans* #38)
Wolfman and Perez, editors
"The Anatomy Lesson" *173*
Alan Moore, Stephen Bissette and John Totleben
(*Saga of the Swamp Thing* #21)
Len Wein, editor
"And One Shall Surely Die" *157*
John Byrne
(*Alpha Flight* #12)
Dennis O'Neil, editor
"Lifedeath" *157*
Chris Claremont, Barry Windsor-Smith & Terry Austin
(*The Uncanny X-Men* #186)
Ann Nocenti, editor
"Secret Wars" series *139*
Jim Shooter, Mike Zeck and John Beatty
(*Marvel Super Heroes Secret Wars*;
#1-8 were published in 1984)
Tom DeFalco, editor
"The Kid Who Collects Spider-Man!" *123*
by Roger Stern, Ron Frenz & Terry Austin
(*The Amazing Spider-Man* #248)
Bob DeNatale, editor (Assistant Editors' Month)

FAVORITE BOOK

'Dazzler' took first place

Dazzler. The Movie 320
by Jim Shooter, Frank Springer & Vince Colletta
(*Marvel Graphic Novel* #12)
The Uncanny X-Men 263
by Chris Claremont, John Byrne & Terry Austin
(Marvel paperback)
Elfquest Book Four 212
by Wendy & Richard Pini
(Donning Press)
Comic Book Price Guide #14 *146*
by Robert M. Overstreet
(Crown)
Void Indigo 144
by Steve Gerber & Val Mayerik
(*Marvel Graphic Novel* #11)
Swords of the Swashbucklers 112
by Bill Mantlo & Jackson Guice
(*Marvel Graphic Novel* #14)
Manhunter 104
by Archie Goodwin & Walter Simonson
(DC deluxe reprint)

FAVORITE CHARACTER

Wolverine clawed his way to the top of the heap

Wolverine *963*
Spider-Man *476*
Batman *272*
Jon Sable *172*
Cerebus *164*
Swamp Thing *143*
Reuben Flagg *132*
Nightwing *126*
Ambush Bug *122*

FAVORITE SUPPORTING CHARACTER

Raul the cat edged out Beta Ray Bill by a whisker

Raul the cat *386*
Beta Ray Bill *385*
Abby (Abigail Arcane Cable) *169*
Mary Jane Watson *147*
Ambush Bug *140*
Wolverine *125*
Judah Maccabee *110*
Nomad *108*

FAVORITE PUBLICATION ABOUT COMICS

'Amazing Heroes' emerged as easy winner

Amazing Heroes 1208
Marvel Age 753
Comics Collector 718
The Comics Journal 310
Comics Interview 184
Comics Feature 148
The Comic Reader 104

FAVORITE WRITER ABOUT COMICS

R.A. Jones of 'Amazing Heroes' took first place

R.A. Jones *185*
Don Thompson *173*
Robert Ingersoll *154*
Cat Yronwode *105*
Lawrence Watt-Evans *100*

FAVORITE FAN ARTIST

Fred Hembeck was the winner by a landslide

Fred Hembeck *713*
Francis Mao *66*
Brian Pearce *51*

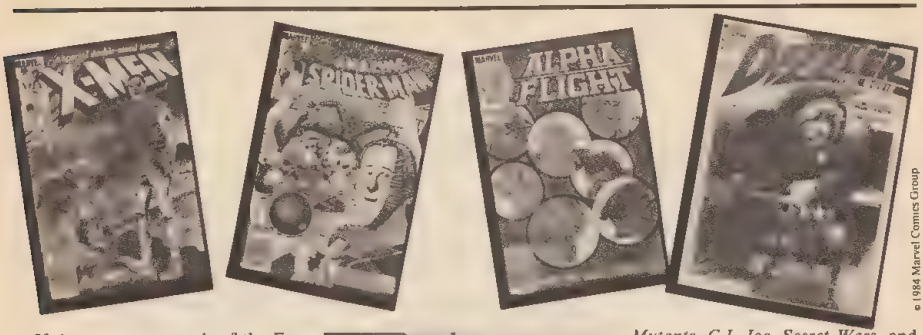
PHIL SEULING AWARD

'New Teen Titans' was favorite direct-sale-only title

New Teen Titans 481
American Flagg! 394
Dreadstar 298
Jon Sable, Freelance 287
Cerebus 192
Infinity, Inc. 137
Marvel Fanfare 129
Marvel Age 117
Elementals 114
Alien Legion 113
Nexus 112

These are the results of a poll of comic-book readers. Ballots appeared in virtually all American comic books, and almost 6,000 comics fans cast their votes for their favorites in the comic-book field. The results were tallied by the editorial staff of ***The Comics Buyer's Guide*** *and appeared in the May 17, 1985 issue of that weekly newspaper.*

A MARVELOUS SHOWING



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If there was one result of the Fan Awards balloting that was not a surprise, it was the way Marvel won category after category.

Marvel publishes, after all, the best-selling line of comics, so it stands to reason that more people like Marvel comics than any others.

Marvel Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter, the person most responsible for today's Marvels, was chosen favorite editor — by one vote over DC's Marv Wolfman. Other Marvel editors on the list of top favorites included Dennis O'Neil, Ann Nocenti, Mark Gruenwald, Archie Goodwin, Danny Fingeroth, Carl Potts, Al Milgrom, and Mike Carlin.

Chris Claremont easily won as favorite writer — no surprise, since he writes *The X-Men*, winner in the Favorite Comic category and best-selling American comic book today. Other Marvel writers in the top group included John Byrne, Walter Simonson, Jim Shooter, Roger Stern, and Louise Simonson.

(The Simonsons deserve special mention as a husband and wife who do not work together but who both made the top list, he for his work as writer-artist on *Thor* and she for writing *Power Pack*.)

John Byrne, writer-artist on *Fantastic Four* and *Alpha Flight*, was the favorite artist; about the time this issue goes on sale, he will switch his talents from *Alpha Flight* to *The Incredible Hulk*. Other Marvel artists finishing in the top group were Bill Sienkiewicz, John Romita Jr., Walter Simonson, and Paul Smith.

X-Men, regularly the top-selling comic book, was easily chosen top-favorite as well. Other Marvels in the winners' circle included *Fantastic Four*, *Alpha Flight*, *Amazing Spider-Man*, *New Mutants*, *G.I. Joe*, *Secret Wars*, and *Thor*.

(Chris Claremont photo by Deborah Upton)

(Top to bottom:) Fan-award winners Jim Shooter, Chris Claremont, John Byrne.

Four Marvel stories made the Favorite Story category; not surprisingly, they included an *X-Man* story, "Lifedeath," in which Storm came to terms with the man who had stolen her powers. Also on the list were "And One Shall Surely Die" for *Alpha Flight* #12, in which a team member died; the first *Secret Wars* series; and a sensitive story about "The Kid Who Collects Spider-Man!" which appeared in *The Amazing Spider-Man* #248.

When it came to Favorite Book, Marvel was back taking the lion's share. Three *Marvel Graphic Novels* — led by *Dazzler: The Movie* — made the list, including *Void Indigo* and *Swords of the Swashbucklers*, both of which became Epic Comics series immediately after their appearance as graphic novels. (*Void Indigo* was canceled after only two issues.) Another heavy favorite in the Favorite Book category was a Marvel paperback, *The Uncanny X-Men*, which reprinted the "Death of Phoenix" series.

Marvel also scored well in the Favorite Character category (Wolverine easily beat the competition, and Spider-Man came in second) and Favorite Supporting Character (where Beta Ray Bill narrowly lost to Raul the cat from *American Flagg!* — joined by Mary Jane Watson, Nomad, and Wolverine; Wolverine's popularity is shown by his strong finish on both lists).

Marvel Age, a news-and-feature magazine about Marvel, did well in the Favorite Publication about Comics category and also finished in the winners' circle as one of the favorite direct-sale-only publications, along with *Marvel Fanfare*, *Dreadstar*, and *Alien Legion*.

(Page 31 clockwise from the left:) ***Nexus****, Cerebus,* ***Jon Sable****, and Favorite Supporting Character Raul (being held by Reuben Flagg). (Page 32 clockwise from the left:)* ***American Flagg!****, The Elementals, and Favorite Publication about Comics* ***Amazing Heroes****.*

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Awards recognize achievement. That rewards the creator of the work winning the award. But awards serve another, equally valuable function which benefits fans: Awards call attention to works of merit which fans might have overlooked.

The ***Comics Buyer's Guide*** Fan Awards, for instance, provide a chance for you to see what your fellow fans and readers consider to be the top comics on the market today.

Maybe you've followed all the **Marvel** titles, so the popularity of *X-Men, Fantastic Four, Alpha Flight, Amazing Spider-Man, New Mutants, G.I. Joe, Secret Wars,* and *Thor* didn't come as a surprise to you. And you might well be aware of such **DC** titles as *New Teen Titans* and *Legion of Super-Heroes.*

But have you been reading *Saga of the Swamp Thing* (now published as *Swamp Thing*), a DC comic book which has become a cult favorite since Alan Moore began writing the book last year?

And then there are titles that you might never have seen, if you buy your comics on the newsstand — titles like *American Flagg!* and *Jon Sable, Freelance* and *Cerebus* and *Elementals* and *Nexus.*

These titles and dozens more are available only in comics shops, by subscription, and through mail-order services. They never show up on drugstore comics racks, they have much lower circulations than Marvel or DC titles — and yet they are the strong favorite of many of your fellow fans.

First Comics, a publisher based in a Chicago suburb, is the fourth largest comic-book publisher (the top three are, in order, Marvel, DC, and Archie, all of which have comics distributed on newsstands). None of First's comics are sold on newsstands.

Voters in the ***CBG*** Fan Awards chose *American Flagg!* and *Jon Sable, Freelance*, both First Comics titles, as the seventh and eighth most popular titles, respectively, of all comic books published today. Those two titles, plus *Nexus*, another First title, also made the list of the 11 favorite non-newsstand comic books.

What are these comic books about?

American Flagg! (the favorite 1984 comic book of almost 200 fans) is written and drawn by Howard Chaykin and is set about 40 years in the future. The world is being run by the TV broadcasters and the shopping malls. (Yes, the shopping malls.) Reuben Flagg, a former TV star, has been made a Plexus Ranger, charged with keeping the peace and constantly fighting attempts by various groups to take over the government, sell Chicago, or simply to commit murder and larceny on a grand scale.

Flagg is aided by Raul the talking cat

LOOK BEYOND THE NEWSSTANDS

(chosen most popular supporting character in the *CBG* Fan Awards poll) and by Luther Ironheart, a naive robot. Stories generally last three issues, with plot threads continuing beyond that.

First Comics recently released the first three issues, plus some new material, as *First Graphic Novel #3: Hard Times*. It provides an excellent introduction to the series for $11.95 and is available from your local comics shop, from many comics mail-order services, and from the Waldenbooks chain of bookstores.

Jon Sable, Freelance is written and drawn by Mike Grell, creator of DC's *Warlord*. Sable is a mercenary soldier who gets mixed up in wars — and in rescuing his many friends from urban guerrillas and other modern dangers. The stories are grimly realistic — when Sable gets shot, it takes him a long time to recover, unlike most comic-book and TV heroes, who heal instantly.

Sable will appear in a cross-over comic book with DC in which he will be teamed with Batman. Grell is writing and drawing the team-up.

Nexus, written by Mike Baron and drawn by Steve Rude, is set in the far future and concerns a super-hero who is being destroyed by his powers. He has dreams which force him to kill an assortment of villains, but the dreams are driving him insane.

Other First Comics titles include *E-Man*, a super-hero parody written by Nicola Cuti and drawn by Joe Staton; *The Badger*, about a super-hero who is literally insane, written by Mike Baron and drawn by Bill Reinhold and Jeff Dee; *Elric*, a sword-and-sorcery adventure adapted by Roy Thomas from the novels by Michael Moorcock, illustrated by Michael T. Gilbert and George Freeman; *Starslayer*, a Mike Grell creation about interstellar pirates, written by John Ostrander and drawn by Jon Eddings and Mark Nelson; and *Grimjack*, written by John Ostrander and drawn by Timothy Truman, about a sort of private detective who deals with the supernatural and fights heavy odds in a ruthless manner.

A new First title, *First Adventures*, features three series: "Whisper" by Steve Grant and Rich Larson, about a woman trained as a ninja warrior; "Dynamo Joe" by John Ostrander and Doug Rice, about a giant robot involved in wars in space and on other worlds; and "Blaze Barlow and the Eternity Command" by Peter Gillis, Kelley Jones, and Barry Crain, about an immortal intergalactic private detective who heads a team of very strange individuals.

First isn't the only non-newsstand publisher to finish high in the poll. *Cerebus*, published by **Aardvark-Vanaheim**, features a talking — and fighting — aardvark in a world very much like Conan's, only funnier. *Cerebus*, created, written, and drawn by Dave Sim, began as a parody of Marvel's *Conan the Barbarian*, but has become much more than that.

You can enjoy *Cerebus* without ever having read a Conan story or seen a Conan movie.

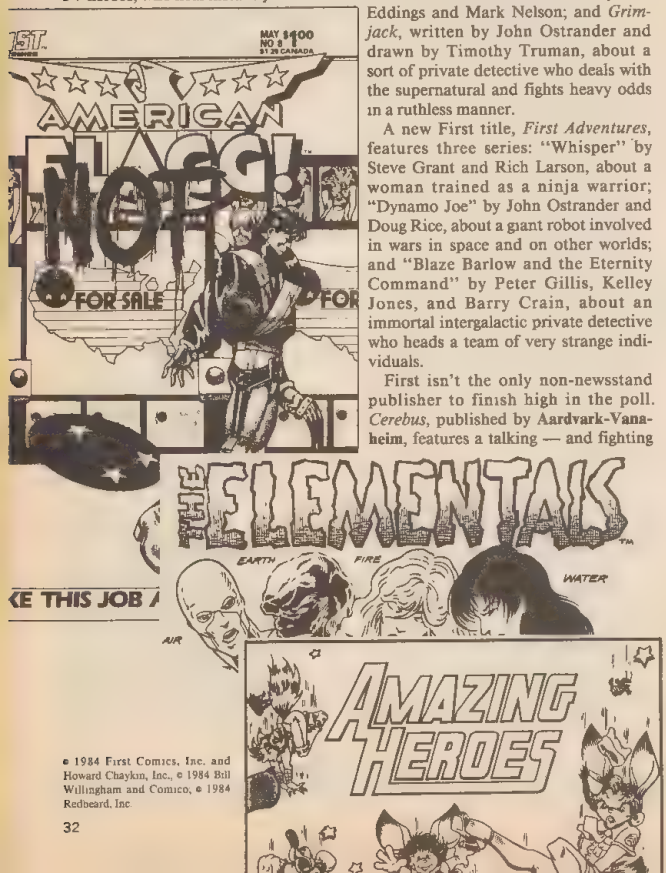
In recent years, Cerebus has risen to prime minister of a major country and is currently the head of his world's major religion. The stories are brilliant parodies with supporting characters who very much resemble the Marx Brothers, Rodney Dangerfield, and, occasionally, a nut who acts like various Marvel super-heroes.

Comico the Comic Company, located in Norristown, Pa., publishes *The Elementals*, a super-hero group created, written, and drawn by Bill Willingham. *The Elementals* (four people each of whom has powers based on earth, air, water, or fire) was voted one of the 11 favorite non-newsstand comics.

Comico also publishes several comic books based on a Japanese animated TV series: *Robotech, the Macross Saga*, *Robotech Masters*, and *Robotech, the New Generation*, as well as *Mage* (about a reluctant super-hero battling supernatural invaders) and *Next Man* (about a super-hero created by the military who is revolting against his creators).

Other non-newsstand comics which did well in the poll without finishing in the top groups include some published by **Eagle** (*Judge Dredd, The Stainless Steel Rat, Judge Dredd's Crime File*); **Eclipse** (whose titles include *DNAgents, Crossfire, Miracleman, Sun-Runners, Pressbutton, Sabre, Alien Encounters,* and *Masked Man*); **Fantagraphics Books** (publisher of *Amazing Heroes*, which won in the category of favorite publication about comics — and for which columnist R.A. Jones, favorite fan writer, reviews comics — *Dalgoda*, and *Journey*); **Kitchen Sink** (*The Spirit, Steve Canyon Magazine, Megaton Man, Will Eisner's Quarterly*); **Mirage** (*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*); **Renegade Press** (*Ms. Tree, normalman, Flaming Carrot, Black Zeppelin, Neil the Horse*); and **WaRP Graphics** (which originated *Elfquest* and now produces *A Distant Soil, Thunderbunny, Myth Adventures*).

There are other publishers — and more coming — but you'll find them for yourselves once you discover the pleasures to be had when you look beyond the newsstands.



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SUPER RESPONSE FOR A SUPER GROUP

The comic-book covers shown on this page and the next appeared on the issues in which appeared comics fans' favorite story of 1984: "The Judas Contract."

One of the biggest winners in the *CBG* Fan Awards poll was DC's best-selling super-group, The New Teen Titans.

The newsstand comic book (originally called *The New Teen Titans* and changed to *Tales of the Teen Titans* during 1984) was second only to Marvel's *X-Men* as the fans' favorite title. The non-newsstand deluxe-paper edition, *The New Teen Titans*, was chosen favorite direct-sale-only title.

And the cover of the first issue of the deluxe-paper *New Teen Titans* (shown on Page 28) won the Favorite Cover category.

In addition, the group's creators scored high: Editor-writer Marv Wolfman was second only to Marvel Editor-in-Chief Jim Shooter as favorite editor and placed third as favorite writer, behind Chris Claremont (*X-Men*) and Alan Moore (*Swamp Thing*). Editor-artist George Perez came in a close second to John Byrne (*Fantastic Four, Alpha Flight*) as favorite artist.

But it was in the category for favorite story that the Titans really showed their strength, taking the top two places.

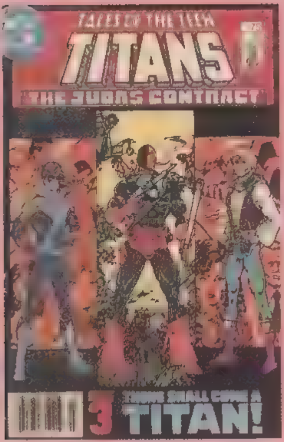
Favorite story of the year was "The Judas Contract," which ran in *Tales of the Teen Titans* #42-44 and then concluded in *Tales of the Teen Titans Annual* #3. This four-part story involved the Titans in battle with one of their bitterest foes (The Terminator), saw them betrayed by one of the Titans, introduced a new member to the team, and ended with the death of a Titan.

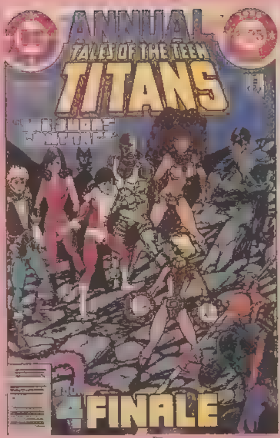
Events in that action-filled story affected the group profoundly and story-lines created by it continued months later.

Second place was taken by a shorter story, the complete-in-one-issue "Who Is Donna Troy?" from *The New Teen Titans* (the newsstand version) #38. Unlike "Judas Contract," this story involved no life-and-death struggles, no protracted fights. Instead, it told how Dick Grayson, using the detective skills taught him by Batman when Dick was Robin, unraveled the mystery behind the origin of Donna (Wonder Girl) Troy, an origin even she hadn't known. Readers found the story moving.

Wolfman frequently demonstrates an ability to tell a compelling story without resorting to long battles and flashy super-villains. In *Tales of the Teen Titans* #50 (cover-dated 1985 and so not eligible for this year's Fan Awards), the entire double-sized issue was devoted to the wedding of Donna Troy. And, unlike almost all other comic-book weddings, there were no super-villains attacking, no battles, no universes in peril — just friends getting together for a wedding, talking out old problems, and reaching understandings. No super-villains were present ("They weren't

Marv Wolfman received 623 votes as Favorite Editor and 707 votes as Favorite Writer in the 1984 fan favorites balloting.





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invited," Wolfman said) and, while there were many super-heroes attending, none of them was in costume.

If you think from that description that the story was dull, you're mistaken. It was an important, emotion-packed story, one which certainly will get many Favorite Story votes in next year's awards poll.

All members of the Titans received strong support as favorite characters or favorite supporting characters, with Titans leader Nightwing (Dick Grayson, formerly Batman's sidekick, Robin) finishing in the top nine.

The Titans, as readers of ***Comics Collector*** for Spring 1984 know, began 20 years ago in *The Brave and the Bold* as a group made up of Robin, Kid Flash, and Aqualad. They appeared in 53 issues of their own title before it was canceled in 1978.

After two years in limbo, the group was revived, with an almost all-new membership, by Marv Wolfman and George Perez. New characters were added — Starfire, Raven, Cyborg — and old ones were revamped, with Robin becoming Nightwing and Beast Boy (a part-time member of the old group) becoming Changeling. Kid Flash and Aqualad have appeared with the group, as has Green Arrow's onetime sidekick Speedy, but none of them is currently an active member of the group.

The New Teen Titans rapidly became DC's best-selling comic book.

Last year, DC tried an experiment with *Titans* and with *Legion of Super-Heroes*, the company's second best-selling super-group title. Each is published for direct-sale-only outlets in a deluxe paper, $1.25 edition (*The New Teen Titans, The Legion of Super-Heroes*). Then, a year later, those comics are reprinted in a 75¢ newsstand edition (*Tales of The Teen Titans, Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes*).

DC calls this its "hardcover-softcover" plan, comparing it to the way a book is published in hardcovers and then, about a year later, as a soft-cover paperback book.

During the first year of the plan, Wolfman had to write two comics a month about the Titans but now, with the first issues of *The New Teen Titans* appearing in *Tales of the Teen Titans*, he is able to concentrate his efforts on one title a month — and he says there are going to be major developments in the lives of the Titans.

Among the developments is the marriage of Starfire — and she is *not* going to marry Dick Grayson! The Titans will travel with her back to her home planet where, Wolfman promises, there will be developments which will change the team forever.

Those developments, judging from Wolfman's record as a writer and editor, almost certainly will lead to more stories as popular with readers as the winners in this year's ***CBG*** Fan Awards.

WHO VOTED?

When comics fans sent in their ballots, those ballots gave a picture of comics fandom today.

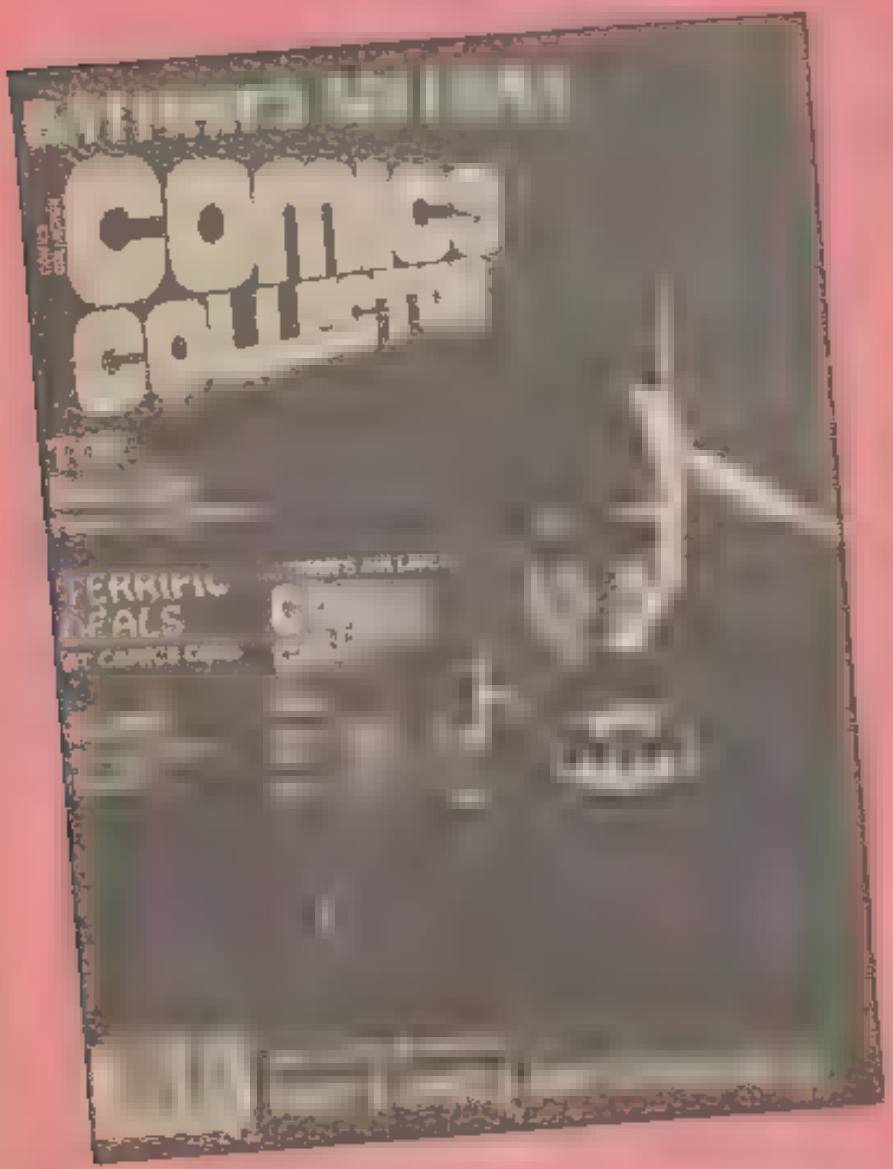
Obviously, not all fans voted; the ones who responded were those who cared enough about comics to pay almost a quarter to express an opinion. (There were hundreds of voters from outside the U.S., as well. It was an international turnout.)

Here is a look at the age of the voters (where given; hundreds declined to give their age). The first number is the age; the second is how many of that age voted:

5: 1
6: 1
7: 1
8: 10
9· 16
10: 55
11: 115
12: 237
13: 472
14: 646
15: 596
16: 501
17: 295
18: 271
19: 245
20· 242
21. 213
22: 153
23: 143
24: 144
25: 145
26: 130
27: 112
28: 101
29: 93
30: 112
31. 93
32: 93
33: 64
34: 48
35: 41
36: 23
37. 23
38: 11
39: 9
40: 4
41: 6
42: 5
43: 2
44: 4
45: 1
46: 4
47: 1
48: 2
49: 2
52: 2
55: 1
67: 1
76: 1

The most common age was 14 years; the age with an equal number above and below it was 17, and the arithmetical average age was 19.13.

Of those who gave their gender on the ballot, 5,579 were male and 309 were female.



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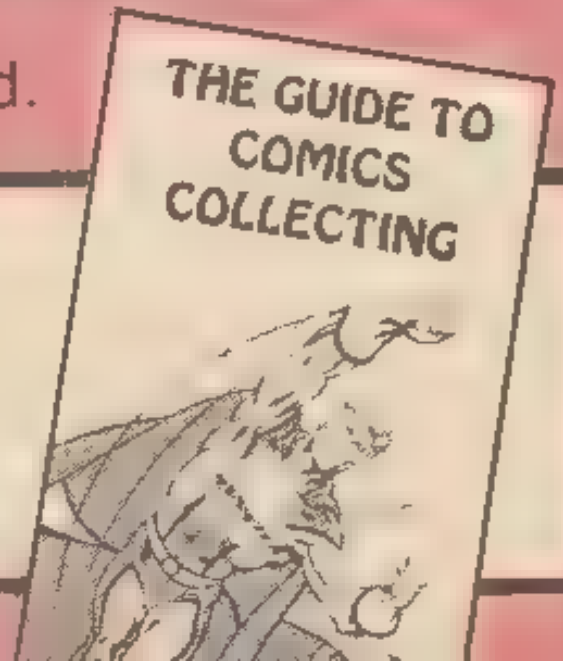

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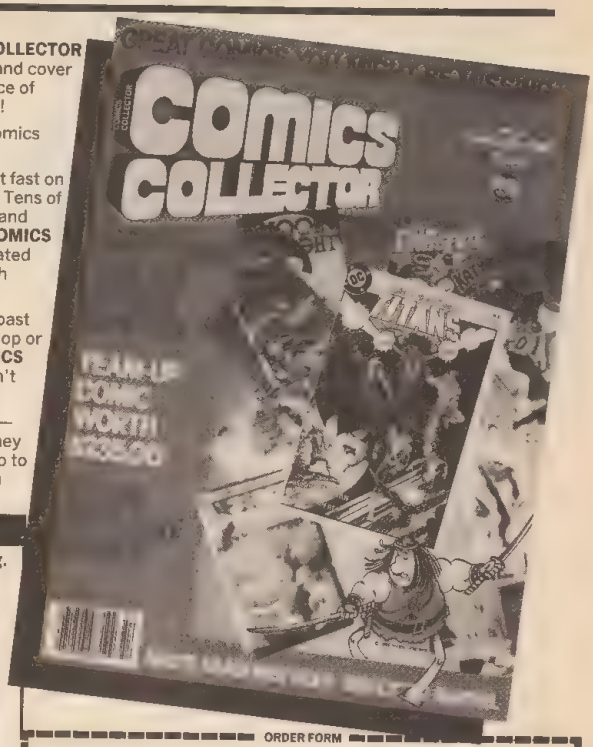

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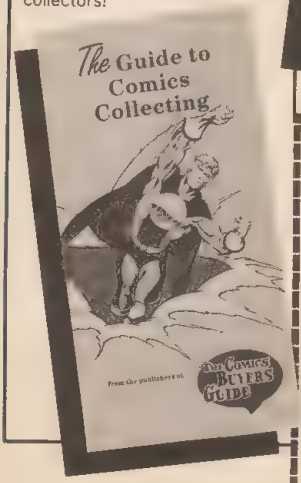

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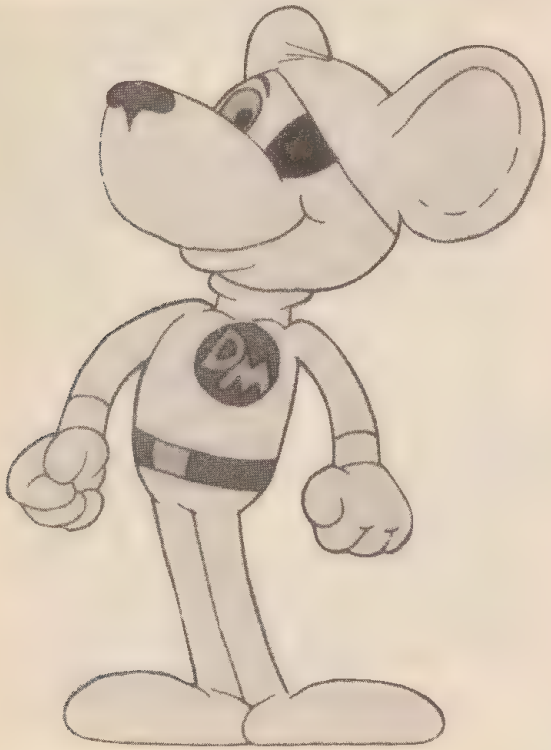
BRIAN COSGROVE

A TALK WITH THE DIRECTOR/ CO • PRODUCER OF "DANGERMOUSE"



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*[**Interviewer's note:** In the March 15 issue of **The Comics Buyer's Guide**, I did a column about a British cartoon series called **Dangermouse**, which airs in the U.S. on the Nickelodeon cable channel. The response was good. For a time, one out of every 10 letters we received was about **Dangermouse**. In addition, each of these letters was favorable towards the series.*

*With a response that good, a follow-up was only natural. I contacted Thames Television, the network that airs **Dangermouse** in England. They in turn put me in touch with Brian Cosgrove — who, with his partner, Mark Hall, produces the series. Mr. Cosgrove also directs **Dangermouse***

*Cosgrove had worked with ITV for nine years. His first cartoon series for television, **The Magic Ball**, was made in*

By Kim Metzger

1970 and won awards at the Chicago and Venice festivals.

*In 1971, Cosgrove formed an independent production company with Hall to produce cartoon and puppet commercials and entertainment films. He produced and directed a Granada-TV-commissioned animated version of the Flanders/Horowitz musical **Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo**, which received great critical acclaim.*

Cosgrove-Hall Productions was set up in 1976 as a subsidiary of Thames Television.

*From the outset, the intention was to make the **Dangermouse** series look different from American imports by using "real" backgrounds and an original style. For each second of **Dangermouse**, 25 animated frames need to be produced — and nearly 15,000 frames are used for a 10-minute episode. It is very much a team effort, and more than 35 staff members are now involved in the animation, which involves the drawing of each frame, which is then painted, filmed under a special rostrum camara, and finally edited.*

***Dangermouse** is now in its seventh series in England and has been sold to 37 countries. The following interview was conducted by phone on April 30, 1985.*

I thank Mr. Cosgrove and Shelagh Pymm, Assistant Press Officer at Thames Television for their time, assistance, and patience.]

*I understand **Dangermouse** has run for seven seasons.*

Seven *series* — seven series of films. At the moment, we are into producing Series Eight. A "series" of films here does not necessarily consist of an identical number of films. I think three series, maybe four series, had 13 films each of 10-minute or 11-minute runs. I think there were two or three series where we were doing 25-minute serialized ones; they were five five-minuters, making up one story. We did two or three series of that type of production.

At the moment, we're currently into making 25-minute films as a total: one story in 25 minutes. We've got six of those in production.

Altogether, with the seventh series, we have something like 140-odd films. And these that we're doing now are separate, on top of the mark.

Aside from the greater length and the work that entails, is there anything else about a 25-minute episode that's harder to do than for a five-minute episode?

No, I don't think so. I think we are now reasonably competent in telling stories.

When we were doing the 10-minute films, we produced them in the fairly classical way. We will come up with a story or idea, then Brian Trueman, our

writer, will write the script. We will record that, then do a storyboard from that recording.

Frankly, what usually happens is that the script comes out far too long. We always seem to have far too many verbal gags. Then the actors get hold of it and they enjoy themselves and we ad-lib a little bit. So the 10-minute films usually time out about 20 minutes, anyway.

Now we've gone on to 25-minute films. They're still coming out even longer. So we've never found the problem in required length. No, no difficulties.

Thames told us that ***Dangermouse*** *is something of a team effort.*

It is very much a team effort. I think we did two, maybe three, pilots. I tried out different actors, and we animated to those voices. When Dangermouse came out a bit boring, you put that film on one side and you say, "We'll have another go at it."

And eventually, I tested David Jason, the man who now does the voice. He's a popular television comedian over here. He has quite a remarkable ability, really, for putting a different voice on and losing his own personality. He's one of those actors, I'm sure you've got many of them in The States, who do voice-overs for television commercials as well. He's got his own television show, his own comedy show. And his television ratings are very high over here.

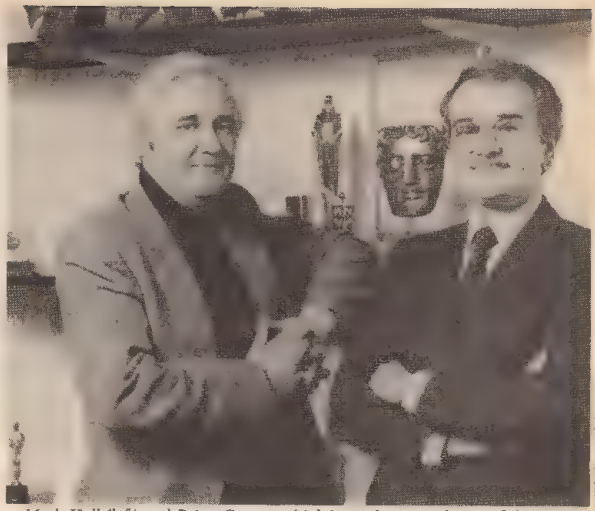
But he also does voice-overs on commercials. He has that odd ability: You don't know it's him, if you can't see his face. And he can create voices — quite an unusual type, I think. He came up with Dangermouse, and for me it was all there. He put so much life in it.

He's also the narrator of the series, the rather crazy narrator we have. He also does occassional odd voices of other characters, and there's no way that anybody'd spot who he is. He's a great mimic; he can do Red Indian voices and all sorts of things. He's a very good guy.

Perhaps like Mel Blanc over here?

Very much so. Mel Blanc is the classic example, isn't he, of the guy who can, with his voice, lose himself in the character? You don't think of Mel Blanc. You think of Bugs Bunny and you think of Daffy Duck and you think of all those other classic characters. But you don't think of one guy doing it. He *becomes* the character.

And it is an unusual talent. If another actor did it, you'd know who that actor was. It really is quite special, I think.



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Mark Hall (left) and Brian Cosgrove (right) are the co-producers of the ***Dangermouse*** *animated cartoon series for Thames Television.*

There's very few of them around, in my experience.

The fellow who does Penfold is another quite well-known television comedian over here. He also has his own show. But there is no doubt at all that, when you hear that, you hear Terry Scott. Everybody over here knows Terry Scott's voice. They know that Penfold is Terry Scott. There is no attempt at disguising his voice. So he's different. He's just right for the character.

A number of people who've seen ***Dangermouse*** *say that they think Penfold is the real star of the series. Would you go along with that?*

[Laughs.] It's quite funny, really, you see, because this is recorded historically that Penfold just came in off the street. He's not a trained assistant spy. He just came in off the street one day, and Dangermouse, being a little bit soft-hearted, didn't have the courage to kick him out. He just carried Penfold around with him.

Penfold is one of those hero-worshipping people who just thinks Dangermouse is terrific. Penfold's a big fraud — but he's lovable. I know people acquire an affection for him, but that's great.

Don't say it to Penfold, because he'll be after top billing.

Who are some of your inspirations in the animation field?

I don't think there's any doubt that all the American animators have done in the past has influenced people like me.

The Warner Brothers films, the Tex Averys, all those fellows are the classic animators in our business. What Disney did — it's very nailed to the wall. You can't ignore it. You can't go back.

We're aware of what the high standards of the business are. We try to get as close as possible to that. We mustn't be blind about it — what Disney did and what the Warner Brothers people did. They're there.

We've got some good animators over here. Some of the London animators are producing commercials out of the classic mold, so it can still be achieved.

Our task is to try and do it within the television system with smaller budgets.

Are you familiar with the work of Jay Ward and Bill Scott, the ***Rocky and Bullwinkle*** *team over here?*

Oh, everybody asks me this! I know that there seems to be a parallel in the humor. I have seen them in the past — but, in all honesty, it's not something that one was thinking of when we devised *Dangermouse*. I mean, I wouldn't be averse to saying that, if it was, because I tend to think that, whatever you do, you are influenced by so many things.

When one makes something like this, it has little bits of everything. We have *Monty Python* and *The Goon Show* over here.

I tend to think that all those influence you as an individual; what you put down is part of our influence. I've seen *Bullwinkle*. It was quite a long time ago wasn't it?

It's really quite sharp — a sharp, funny series. One was a squirrel and one was — um, oh gosh — wasn't he a deer or bull moose?

A moose, yes.

A bull moose. I do remember seeing them, and they were very funny and very witty, straight out of the American mold. You know, they're for children, but nevertheless, adults can look at them — which is the sort of material we try to make. But we certainly weren't thinking of that when we made *Dangermouse*.

It's a coincidental parallel. I mean, they are just vehicles for humor, aren't they, and valid and justifiable? *Bullwinkle* is a terrific series. But, in all honesty, I couldn't say it was one we were thinking of when we started out on *Dangermouse*.

Do you know how many episodes of ***Dangermouse*** *are available here in America right now?*

All the ones up to Series Seven. That's all 140-odd episodes. But they're packaged differently for The States.

You tend to take them in the longer swath; it's about 20-odd minutes, I think, on cable. So we would put two of the 10-minute films together; that would be one show.

Then the ones that were five-minute episodes: We would join them up and make one 20-minute show out of that, so some would be cut out.

And the ones we're doing now, the 25-minute ones, will be trimmed down a little to fit the slots that you have, which are about 22½ minutes.

A videocassette collection of some of the cartoons has just been released in America. Do you know if those consist of complete cartoons?

No. I put them together. I think you've got #1 out in The States, which is an hour-long tape containing — gosh, how many shows has it got?

It has "Custard" on it, I know that.

Yes. I think it's something like over 60 minutes. We try to give good value for money. I think there's two of the 25's. I really can't remember.

That was one videotape. Since then, over here, I've put together five in all. I think it was one of the Scandinavians who've bought five hour-long tapes. So we've had three out here — or maybe four. We could go on putting out the commercial tapes for as long as the public buys them, really.

I think you might have #1.

So far there haven't been any major female characters in ***Dangermouse****. Are there any coming up?*

Well, it's always a tricky one, this. Our business is one of characters who are grotesque. If you draw a female character, you want her to be feminine. And you have to do her — well — watered-down.

She's got to be pretty-pretty and go around sighing and having hearts coming away from her. You have to almost be insulting to women, because women are not like that.

The other way of treating a female character in cartoons is witches and so on. But then you're not really drawing a woman. It's more like a man, a caricature, grotesque again.

It's a little bit difficult because I don't think you can laugh at women.

It's always a tricky one. We do a number of different series over here. We do stories for very young children where you've got mums and little girls. And there they are treated like real little girls and they *act* like real little girls.

If you've got a cartoon series like *Dangermouse*, where you're dealing with more robust humor, it's very difficult to find a place where you could put a girl. If you put, say, a Russian female spy in it, I don't know, it doesn't seem to work somehow. We don't seem to be able to laugh at girls.

One cartoon was about Fifi, a lost love of Dangermouse's.

[Laughs.] Which got him very embarrassed.

Yes, Penfold knows about a lost love of Dangermouse's, a young lady in Paris. Dangermouse gets rather embarrassed about it. I think there's a certain charm about that. I think that's the right way to think about it. Love is a precious thing.

Dangermouse was lucky enough to have one at one time, and I can understand about him being slightly embarrassed.

One of the favorite minor characters over here seems to be Quark's robot, Grovel. Do you know where the idea for him came from?

That was Keith Scobele, one of our designers.

Grovel is a sort of robot-butler to J.G. Quark. Quark arrived here to claim Earth, because he'd been left it in his grandfather's will or something and he'd come to collect the Earth. And he brought with him this robot. It just seemed like a good idea at the time.

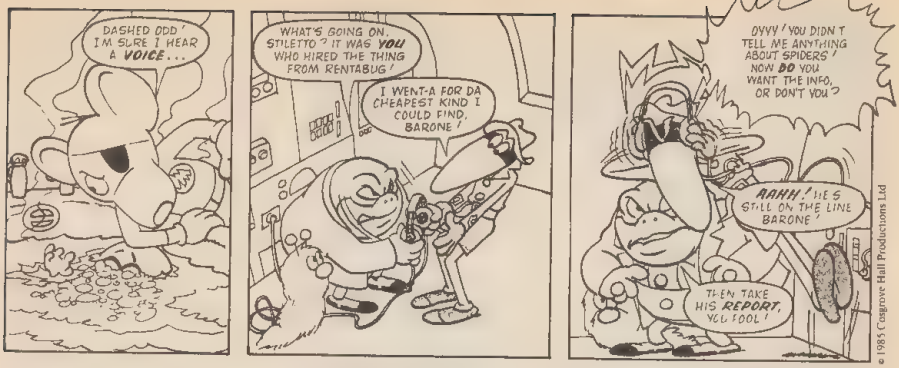
You call him "Grovel," and every time you say it he falls on his face and grovels. We got quite a bit of fun out of that.

Do you get very much fan mail from America?

No, not a lot. We've got the odd one or two now. We write back to them. We've picked up one or two friends writing to us direct.

I think Nickelodeon, the cable station, gets quite a lot of mail. It doesn't, at this stage, get filtered back to us. I know that they get it, but it's not filtered back to us, no.

We've noticed that, among the people to whom ***Dangermouse*** *appeals over*



Dangermouse hears a bug hired by Baron Greenback to bug Penfold's bathtub. (The bug was just attacked by a spider who already happened to be in the bathtub drain.) Characters in the first two panels: Penfold, DM, Nero, Greenback, Stiletto.

here are children, of course. In fact, our ad manager told us that his little girl likes the show so much that she's been asking for an eyepatch.

[Laughs.] Really? That's nice!

Yes. And the people to whom ***Doctor Who*** *appeals here seem to like* ***Dangermouse*** *a lot. Is there any sort of cultish thing to* ***Dangermouse*** *over there that you've noticed?*

Oh, yes! He did become a sort of cult thing over here. Well, he still is, to a certain extent.

We had a group in Oxford University who formed themselves into a fan club and wrote us letters about it, which only shows that humor is a pretty far-reaching thing. We've had police stations and army units who formed themselves into clubs.

Yes, it's been sort of a cult thing over here. My oldest daughter is in a university on the other side of the country.

When she first went there, she was a little bit worried about it. Being modest and a girl, you don't want to go along there and say that your father does *Dangermouse*. They tend to be a little bit quiet about it. When she got there, the campus was full of people all wearing Dangermouse badges.

I think she's become quite proud of me. [Laughs.] But yes, that has happened over here.

I understand there's something like 250 pieces of merchandise from ***Dangermouse.***

Yes, it's coming very well. It covers the whole range of items, slippers, T-shirts, clothing and pajamas, jigsaw puzzles, publishing of all sorts, games, kiddies' erasers, rulers, pencils, and computer games. It just goes on and on and on: soft toys, sort of wind-up things.

Is there such a thing as a Penfold wind-up toy?

Well, they all seem to have gone for Dangermouse. I suppose, again, that's understandable. Manufacturers, when they get into these things, they're wary people. They're careful with their money. They've gone for the main figure, Dangermouse.

A lot of people were surprised that we didn't get merchandising on Nero, Greenback's little pet caterpillar. And I think I was, too, to be honest, because around the company here we must split it 50-50, men and women, animators and designers, and so on. And all the women seem to be mad on Nero, a cuddly sort of caterpillar. It was a big surprise that they didn't pick him up.

Have you gotten any offers for anything from manufacturing over here?

We are in the process of establishing a merchandising agent over there — it's not settled yet — in New York.

Then we will be going after licensees. But we have had a number of people who do want to take out licenses on the character. We've been holding back up to now, because he's only shown on the Nickelodeon channel. Well, I say "only." I mean, it's something like 26 million homes which, from this side of the water, is a pretty enormous viewing number compared to our television. But over there in The States, I suppose it's reasonably small, because you've got about 300 million people over there, haven't you?

What we're starting to do is talk about syndication and pushing the series all around The States. That's the plan. We're setting up a merchandising agent now, and it'll be a different thing. It'll be done in a bigger way than if we take just the first one or two.

Have you had any complaints about violence in ***Dangermouse*** *over there?*

No, no. I think we — oh, how can I put it?

I myself did never find any offense in the sort of violence that I know is being condemned in The States that was in the Warner Brothers films. I personally never found that offensive.

But, then, I'm an adult and I think we can take more robust humor.

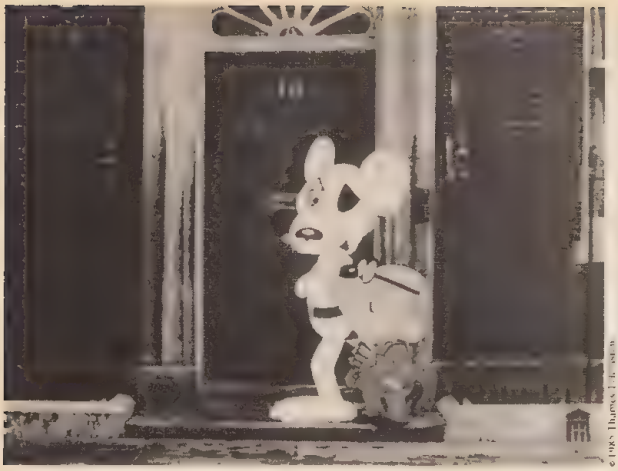
I think it is right and proper that the groups that you're talking about are concerned about violence and protective of youngsters. I like to believe that what we've done with *Dangermouse* comes from the sort of people that we are. I don't think we're violent people. I don't think we could put things in it that would be offensive to people. That's my view.

I could always be wrong — but we've had lots of people saying that *Dangermouse* doesn't contain violence, that we've managed to be witty and humorous without unnecessary violence. But I think I'm going to leave that to other people to judge and make their decisions rather than me.

I would stand behind *Dangermouse*. I would honestly hope that those groups would not find anything offensive in it. And, if they did, I would be hurt and really quite disappointed, since we've set out to produce a series of stories that youngsters and adults can look at and get pleasure from.

What were some of your favorite cartoons when you were young?

Well, mainly American ones, of



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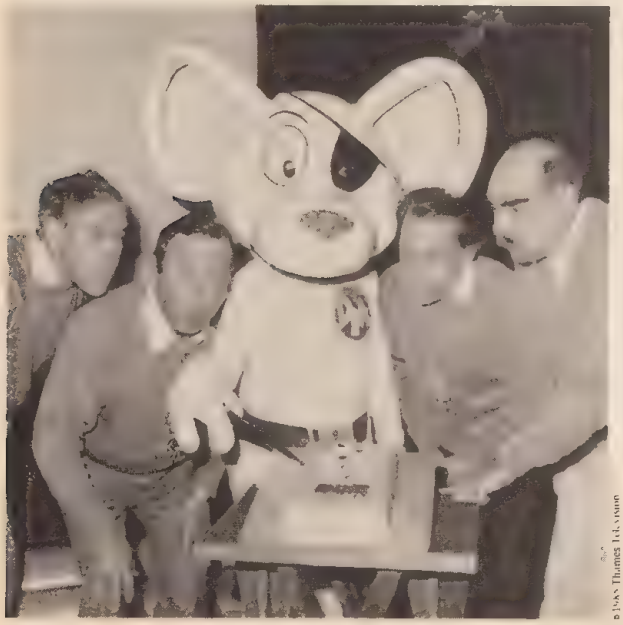
(Above:) Dangermouse and Penfold wait on the doorstep of 10 Downing Street, residence of the Prime Minister of England. (Below:) This commemorative photograph was taken at Dangermouse's fifth birthday party. Blowing out the candles (while DM cut the cake) were (left to right) Brian Trueman (writer and performer), Terry Scott (voice of Penfold), David Jason (voice of Dangermouse), and Edward Kelsey (voice of Baron Greenback).



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course. Bugs Bunny and all of those guys, the Tweety Pies and Sylvesters. They're so maturely humorous, aren't they?

They're not "twee," they're not done for little babies, they are done for the child that's in an adult and the adult that's in the child, I think.

I look at children and I'm not altogether sure that I feel beyond, say, about five, that that's what you think of as a child. We just think they're sort of adults, just a little bit littler. In other words, what we try and do is credit them with a degree of intelligence.

Those youngsters live in the world that we live in, and I think their environment is quite a mature one with television. We try to produce humor in what I think the Warner Brothers guys did, where an adult could look at it and get a smile and the children could, as well.

My favorites were certainly the Warner Brothers films, certainly Disney.

I like what Don Bluth did with *The Secret of NIMH*. I thought that was a beautiful film.

It is sad that his firm has gone bankrupt; I'd noticed that he'd gone into working on computer games, which puzzled me because *The Secret of NIMH* was *beautiful*, and he deserved, in my view, to get support for more films of that type.

I felt he'd gone back to what Disney was a long time ago. There was so much fun in *NIMH*. That crow that he had in it was a beautiful piece of character animation, beautiful stuff.

Did you have any idea ***Dangermouse*** *was going to be when you were putting it together?*

No! No way, no!

When we set this company up, I had a small group of designers. My partner, Mark Hall, and I had a company before this.

We set this one up with the Thames Television company. We kept our small group of people together. *Dangermouse*, effectively, was always like a training ground where I got a new team together and I said, "We're going to have some fun with this. We're going to enjoy ourselves."

It's a little bit of a surprise that it's taken off the way it has. That really is a point I was going to make about the publicity piece you were sent. It says it was nominated for a British Academy of Film and Television Arts award, a British Oscar. It's been nominated for four.

Its viewing figures over here are consistantly high. So we're reaching the spot.

That makes you feel good.

It means that the things that make us smile, the sort of programs that we want to make, people enjoy watching. Yes, it's a bit of a surprise, but very, very pleasant.

For our other films, by the way, we've won the BAFTA award twice.

We also won an Emmy last year, one of your American International Emmys.

*Was the Emmy for **Dangermouse**?*

No, it wasn't. It was for a model-animated version of *Wind in the Willows* that Mark Hall directed.

By models, do you mean clay models, clay animation?

No, it was more like they are framed figures, with a mechanical skeleton inside, and you move them a frame at a time, stop-motion.

*Is **Dangermouse** shown at 5 p.m. in England every Monday through Friday?*

No, it doesn't go out every day here. At the moment, it's going out once a week.

One of the biggest problems we've got, frankly, is turning out the required number. I mean, the seven series that we've done were four years' work.

We're starting another couple of years' adding to that. But the American networks want something like 65 half-hours. It's difficult for us to do that.

I think what we've got over there in the package is about 40-odd half hours. So when it goes out over here, it's taken us 12 months to do 13 10-minute films.

The way we've put them out in the past is twice a week: one on a Tuesday and one on a Thursday, I think.

When we were doing the five-minute films, then they did go out one five-minute film every day. But we haven't got a production flow to turn out a 10-minute or 20-minute film and put it out every day.

What sort of neighborhood is Wilsdon-Green, which is constantly referred to in the scripts?

{Laughs.} It's a small suburb of London. And don't be fooled by the word "green," because London's a pretty built-up area now, anyway. There is nothing particularly special about it. I mean, you could apply it to your own locality, wherever you live.

We work here in a place called Chorlton-cum-Hardy. There's a sort of humor in that name, isn't there? It's a funny thing; it rolls off the tongue. You can get a private smile out of something like that, and it's in that vein, Wilsdon-Green. It's nothing special.

Do you have any particular favorites among the episodes that you've done?

Yes, one called "Time Slip." That's one of my favorites.

"Time Slip" is one where they get sent back into time, the time of Robin Hood. And they're effectively doing what we have over here, a Christmas panto-mime.

Dangermouse has to wear Robin Hood's hat, and Penfold is dressed sort of in Lincoln green. He's called "Very-Little John."

Is that where the announcer is in control of the show?

That's it. The announcer is in control. I like that one.

We've done one where Greenback's device was putting the spines from cactus into people's seat cushions, and it causes an awful lot of havoc. Dangermouse goes over to Mexico to sort it out and gets involved in a bullfight. I like that one.

I don't know. There's quite a lot that I like. There was one called "Trouble with Ghosts" that I quite liked. I thought it was one of our stronger ones.

A favorite over here seems to be "Play It Again, Wufgang."

"Play It Again, Wufgang" was a fun one, because he was a crazy character that we enjoyed working with. And the animation I was particularly pleased with. They were working to a recorded tape and they were marching to marching music. I think he'd stolen all the special effects music, that's what it was. Yes, that was a good one. There's some nice animation in that one.

There are some animation studios over here which would be afraid of doing something like that, having the characters realize that they are cartoon characters. They're afraid it would upset the "illusion of reality."

Really? Oh, no. I think you've got to break rules. I think it's lovely to break rules. I think we've had Dangermouse say, when he's in a particularly tight spot, "Oh, well, never mind, it's only a cartoon." I think that's funny.

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Dangermouse, [illegible] over the head starts to follow Penfold into one of Baron Greenback's many traps.

DANGERMOUSE: MOUSE IN A MILLION

By Martin Lock

Dangermouse, that superlative secret agent, has been a great success in Britain. Created by Brian Cosgrove and Mark Hall of Cosgrove/Hall Productions Limited, he has been a regular star of British television since his debut at 5 p.m. Monday, September 28, 1981.

His initial run was of 10 episodes, shown twice weekly, each of just over 10 minutes.

He returned in January 1982, at the earlier time of 4:15 p.m., with five-minute episodes, five days a week, and is now well into his seventh "season," with a total of 142 episodes made, in a mixture of the two lengths. They have all been shown on Britain's main commercial television channel at least once, and Dangermouse, with his distinctive black eye-patch and white jump suit, has become one of the top attractions of children's television — assisted, of course, by the faithful Penfold, codenamed "Jigsaw" because he always goes to pieces.

DM's adventures have been put together for showing in America (on the Nickelodeon cable network) into a total of 44 half-hour shows, which are run seven days a week. Britain, however, has seen no episode more than twice — since, with only four television channels widely available, the policy on repeat showings is rather different. Nevertheless, he's become just about the best-known cartoon star in Britain.

Not only is the animation dynamic and, compared with most other current work, sophisticated, but the plots Dangermouse gets embroiled in are more than simple-minded fights, with enough subtlety to entrance adult viewers.

Just over five months after DM's television debut, the weekly magazine *Look-In*, a junior *TV Guide*-type of publication mixing photo-features with comic strips, cover-featured Dangermouse and Penfold on its issue for March 6, 1982 (#10). Inside began a full painted-color, two-page strip of their exploits, written by Angus P. Allan and drawn by Arthur Ranson, both regular *Look-In* contributors — though Ranson had previously been known best for beautifully realistic color work on strips adapting such programs as *Buck Rogers* and the cult time-travel show *Sapphire and Steel*.

Unlike most of the other strips of the time, *Dangermouse* is still running more than three years later — for a total of well over 300 full-color, magazine-size comic strip pages.

As *Dangermouse* has been known to vanish from television screens in Britain for six or seven months at a time, the *Look-In* strip, with more than 260,000 purchasers per week, has had a great part to play in keeping the character visible.

In fact, co-creator Brian Cosgrove has said, "I'm a big fan of the *Look-In* Dangermouse strip. Although I see the stories beforehand, I don't actually do the drawings, and I think they're excellent — exactly right. In fact, when somebody comes to me wanting to make Dangermouse badges or T-shirts or whatever, I tend to say, 'Take a look at the *Look-In* strip — that's what it's all about.' "

And Allan and Ranson have been presented with special statuette awards by Cosgrove/Hall Productions: the first ever Dangermouse and Penfold Good Grief/Oh Crikey Award, "presented for Outstanding Service to Dangermousism above and beyond the Call of Duty (or something like that)."

More recently, some TV episodes, while still written by Brian Trueman, have carried an additional credit for the original storyline, "by Angus P. Allan of *Look-In* Magazine." It is not often that a program-maker likes the work of the comics spin-off writer so much that he's hired to write for the television series itself!

I spoke to Arthur Ranson about his involvement with the character, and he assured me that he's happy to stay on the strip — "I do enjoy it most of the time."

Its position in *Look-In* is safe, since "too many people like it for it to go," and, indeed, Dangermouse's fans are to be found everywhere. "It's quite popular with the [college] student set, apparently. It does have a certain amount of cult following."

Indeed, while there is as yet no official fan club in Britain, there is a club at Oxford University and another at York.

"Dangermouse may be the greatest hero ever, but I think he's got quite a nice personality to go with it," creator Brian Cosgrove remarked, and this has to be one of the keys to DM's success.

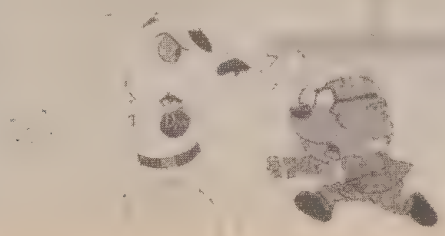
Even people who don't like the crash-bang-wallop style of most cartoons can find DM's "gentler" style, relying more on character and less on exaggerated violence, to their taste. Steve Norman of the rock group *Spandau Ballet* admits to being "a registered Dangermouse fanatic! He and Penfold have got to be the funniest double act ever. If I'm at home, I never miss it, but otherwise I have to make do with reading his adventures, or catching up with it on video." Howard Jones (whose most recent U.S. album is *Dream into Action* on Elektra) likes Dangermouse "because he's such a hero — ice cool in every situation, with some of the funniest lines on television!"

Director Brian Cosgrove commented that it was on the early stages of production that the team had the most fun.

"We have a lot of laughs making things up," he said. "Like Nero, the evil caterpillar. When he was invented he didn't have any words, but we needed a sound for him. What we eventually concocted was the actor, David Jason, talking rubbish and then being speeded up three times. It sounded perfect!"

Has Brian got his own favorites?

"Oh, yes. I like Agent 57, the master of disguise, who can change himself into anything from a milk bottle to a brick wall to a polar bear."



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Dangermouse himself is based on that other famous British secret agent, James Bond, with all his verve and *savoir-faire* — while his Baker Street address hints at a link with that famous inhabitant of number 221B, Sherlock Holmes. Colonel "K," his boss, comes from Bond's "M," at least initially, while Baron Silas Greenback, too, can be traced back to Ian Fleming's novels — to Ernst Stavro Blofeld, in fact.

The Baron's chief henchman, Stiletto, is in Britain an Italian crow; for America, he has been re-voiced with a "South London" accent, and lost his surname of "Mafiosa," to avoid giving offense to Americans of Italian extraction.

As well as to Brian Cosgrove, Mark Hall, and their animators, a good deal of credit must go to the voice artists — writer Brian Trueman, Edward Kelsey, Terry Scott, and David Jason. They all do a number of voices, but where would Penfold be without Terry Scott's "Crikey" or DM himself without David Jason's "Good Grief"?

Terry Scott has been a well-known comedian for at least three decades in Britain. He has starred in a number of comedy movies (including many of the *Carry On* series) and many television situation comedy series, including the current *Terry and June*. At one time, he was best known for portraying a young schoolboy in short trousers, narrating the recent misdeeds of himself and his "bruvver." His voice for that character formed the basis for Penfold's ever-panicky tones.

David Jason has also starred in a number of television situation comedy series in Britain, including *Open All Hours* and the currently popular *Only Fools and Horses*, based on the Cockney proverb that "Only fools and horses work." His vocal versatility has also been spotlighted on radio, particularly in a weekly comedy satire series, *Week Ending*, which involved some joyously accurate impersonations of politicans and media celebrities, but Dangermouse must be his most endearing creation — with the possible exception of the show's reluctant, cranky announcer!

As well as taking up permanent residence in *Look-In*, Dangermouse can also be found in strip form in one of Britain's national Sunday newspapers, *The Mail on Sunday*, where it runs as a half-page newspaper strip in Britain's only color comics supplement, in the "coverless comic-book" format.

Unfortunately, while Allan and Ranson were originally approached to do this strip as well, the money available was not enough to persuade them to take up this extra challenge; instead, the strip is produced "in-house" by Cosgrove/Hall Productions, and is not as good. The coloring couldn't be as sophisticated, of course, but the scripts pay little attention to any nominal plot continuity, focusing instead on truly awful jokes. This is part of DM's charm, of course — but is only one factor in the success of "The most famous mouse since Mickey," as *Look-In* hailed him.

And *Look-In* was right. Not only is Dangermouse the star of a very successful cartoon series, attracting at least 5½ million viewers for each episode screened on Independent Television, but he's also one of the leading merchandising characters, with more than 250 different products licensed.

There's a two-foot-high soft toy (£11.99 — about $15), a rucksack, pencils, sketch pads, and all the usual paraphernalia, including fizzy drinks, secret agent play kits, talcum powder, and a lot more.

The spring of 1983 saw the release of DM's first video cassette compilation, which for around £20 ($25) gave a full hour's worth of swashbuckling adventure, bringing back the television episodes entitled "Custard," "Close Encounters of the Absurd Kind," "The Bad Luck Eye of the Little Yellow God," and "Trouble with Ghosts." Three more such compilations have since followed, and they've all been good sellers, with DM getting right to the top of the videotape charts in the first week of the launch of one of them.

There are also two computer-game cassettes available for the Sinclair Spectrum and the Commodore C64: "Dangermouse in the Black Forest Chateau" and "Dangermouse in Double Trouble."

The most accessible and collectible item, however, is the hardbound *Dangermouse Annual*, published (like *Look-In*) by Independent Television Publications Ltd. As well as junior jokes and puzzles, the 1985 book contains in its 64 colorful pages four DM text tales (written by Angus Allan and illustrated in full color on every page by Arthur Ranson): "Piper! Piper! Read All about It!", "Bunfight at the No-Way Corral," "The Case of the Ice Cream Doomsdae," and "Long Time No Sea." Allan captures the flavor of the cartoons admirably, as ever, and the looser format and larger pictures give Ranson more scope for his talents, with settings that are quite as good as Goscinny and Uderzo's "Asterix" books, and some endearing visual jokes. The price of this Annual is £2.95.

Dangermouse and Penfold actually appeared in 3-D, during a special *Look-In* promotion (1983, #16). The device that permitted it was a plot by Baron Greenback to remove all color from things; Penfold, naturally, found the experience rather disorienting, but DM — since he only uses one eye — was unaffected.

Cosgrove/Hall Productions has other credits besides *Dangermouse*, though the Remarkable Rodent does tend to overshadow its other achievements. Since Brian Cosgrove and Mark Hall joined forces in 1971, a number of cartoon and puppet films have appeared under their banner. These include:

- an animated version of the *Captain Noah and his Floating Zoo* musical
- "The Talking Parcel"
- "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" (winner of the 1982 Prix Jeunesse in Munich and the 1982 BAFTA Best Children's Programme Award)
- a "silent film" puppetry version of "Cinderella"
- the TV series *Chorlton and the Wheelies* and *Cockleshell Bay*, devised for younger children
- *The Wind in the Willows*, a prestigous stop-motion animation adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's classic novel of "Toad of Toad Hall," which is the winner of the 1983 BAFTA Award for Best Children's Program and a 1984 International Emmy. It led to a weekly series of further adventures, enjoyed both by children and adults and employing some well-known British actors as voice artists — including David "DM" Jason.

The present production company was formed in 1976 and is a subsidiary of Thames Television, the London-based weekday TV station that supplies *DM* to the Independent Television ("ITV") network.

Dangermouse is an international success story; as well as being in one of the most frequently transmitted British cartoons ever made, his adventures have now been seen in 35 countries. While other projects and other priorities have slowed down the output of new cartoons from Cosgrove/Hall, the latest news is that some longer episodes will be appearing next year.

So the world has not seen the last of the spotless, sophisticated super secret agent or, indeed, of his harried, helpless hamster helper.

COMICS COLLECTOR'S CORNER

THE WORLD OF COMICS: 1949

"Comparatively few retail newsdealers are aware that every third magazine they sell is a comic magazine — that 25% of the gross profit of their magazine department comes from sales of comics — that newsdealers throughout the United States and Canada earn over *eighteen million dollars a year* from the sale of comic magazines!

Seven comics today have a newsstand sale in excess of one million copies!

The percentage of profits on comic magazines, too, is well above the profits earned through the sale of magazines in other price categories: 25% profit on each magazine sold!

***Young Romance* pioneered the "love" comics field. It was a terrific success with sales approaching the million mark. Today, months later, better than 50 titles are being published and sold in the "love" field with an estimated combined sale of 11 millions! And *Young Romance* is selling better than ever!"**

— Excerpts from "Comics Pay Off" by Paul Sampliner, president of Independent News Company (largest comics distributor in the world), as printed in ***Newsdealer*** *for July 1949*

INVESTING IN COMICS

Today's market is as varied, interesting, and volatile as any since people started collecting comics. As an investor, I find these to be particularly interesting times since, for the most part, the best investments are not necessarily the most popular comics.

For example, what would you say was the best comic, investment-wise, published in the last decade: *X-Men*? Nope. *Cerebus* is more valuable and in demand than any other comic published in the last 10 years. In fact, with but a handful of exceptions, most of the really hot collector's titles have come from the direct-only publishers.

The direct market is growing all the time, and there will always be collectors in areas where a direct outlet isn't feasible, thus increasing the demand. Higher cover price and a glutted market also make competition among these titles even stiffer. Dealers often do not backstock many copies of titles like *Journey*, *Love and Rockets*, and *Elementals*. All these factors make titles like the ones I just mentioned — and others — good investments for the collector.

You may be wondering why a comic like *Journey* would be a better investment than, say, *Spider-Man*. The reason is that *Journey* has a circulation of 25,000 copies per issue and *Spider-Man* 300,000 copies. So, while there are more collectors of *Spider-Man* than *Journey*, there are more *Journey* collectors *proportionate* to the circulation. And the early issues are extremely scarce. Next time you're at a con, check the dealers there and you will probably find more dealers with *Spider-Man* #1-3 than *Journey* #1-3.

There are two drawbacks to speculating in the direct titles. They are fairly expensive, ranging from $1.25 to $2.95 a pop. And the failure rate among these titles is going to be higher than that of your average DC or Marvel title. So it is often either feast or famine in the direct market; for every *American Flagg!* there's a *Mars* or *Silverheels* or *Mighty Crusaders*.

However, that's also what makes the market interesting — not to mention the joy in being the first on your block who's hip to *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*!

Many of the most collectible of these comics are black-and-white, and the most collectable ones are generally odd-shaped, usually 8½"x11". Both these factors make the book less commercial, and as a result, more collectible.

The other main thing that these comics have in common is their high quality and originality. These are what allow them to survive despite the high cover price, lack of color, and unusual size. This is also the factor that you can look for in new titles as they hit the stands.

I make a regular habit of watching new titles carefully and being prepared to get substantial reorders on a title that looks promising.

Here's a list of some of the hotter direct titles and what they are going for in this area. **Often issues sell better in one region, and there can be regional shortages that can drive prices up, but I think that these prices are pretty reflective of the national average.**

American Flagg! #1 ..... $4.50
Cerebus #1 ..... $200
#2 ..... $125
#3-5 ..... $100
#6-10 ..... $50
#11-20 ..... $25
#21-30 ..... $10
#35 (hard to find) $6
Elementals #1 ..... $10
#2 ..... $5
Nexus (b&w) #1 ..... $25
#2 ..... $10
Justice Machine #1 (diminishing demand) $10
Crusaders #1 (Retitled *Southern Knights* from issue #2 on; Guice art in #1) $10
Love & Rockets #1 ..... $20
#2, 3 ..... $10
#4 ..... $6
Jon Sable #1 ..... $4
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #1 (first printing) $50
Journey #1 ..... $6
#2, 3 ..... $4
Flaming Carrot #1 ..... $5
Mr. X #1 ..... $4
#2 (hard to find) $10
Fantasy Quarterly #1 (First appearance of *Elfquest*. Also, now that they are out-of-print, the early issues of *Elfquest* are appreciating in value and are becoming harder to find.) $50

Prices on *Cerebus* seem to fluctuate more. The *Crusaders* and Guice are probably hotter in the South than elsewhere, just as *Love & Rockets* and *Flaming Carrot* are more popular on the West Coast.

I wouldn't be too surprised to see the late '70s and '80s referred to as Comics' Second Golden Age in years to come, and many of these books will be treasured items that will be well worth having in the future.

—Ward Batty

COMICS BIRTHDAYS

JULY

1 Billy Graham (1935)
5 Shel Dorf (1933)
6 Frank Giacoia (1925)
6 Arn Saba (1947)
6 John Byrne (1950)
6 Stan Timmons (1956)
8 Irwin Hasen (1918)
8 Stan Woch (1959)
9 Joe Delbeato (1956)
9 Virginia Romita
10 Joe Shuster (1914)
10 Bob Larkin (1949)
11 Dan Barry (1923)
11 Ron Zalme
13 Mike Ploog (1940)
13 Tom Palmer (1942)
13 Ernie Colon
14 Mike Esposito (1927)
15 Jack Abel (1927)
17 Mike Tiefenbacher (1952)
19 Richard Pini (1950)
19 Bob Burden (1952)
20 Dick Giordano (1932)
24 Colleen Doran (1963)
24 Ricardo Villamonte
24 Trevor Von Eeden
25 Alex Wald (1949)
26 Bob Pinaha (1953)
27 Ernie Chan (1940)
28 John J. Muth (1960)

AUGUST

2 Dave Hunt (1942)
4 Mike Gold (1950)
5 Bob Orzechowski (1960)
6 Ed Hannigan
7 Janice Cohen (1952)
9 Bob McLeod
11 Dik Browne (1918)
13 Jim Mooney (1919)
13 Bret Blevins (1960)
14 John Costanza
15 Terry Shoemaker (1960)
15 Paul Gulacy
17 John Romita, Jr.
19 George Roussos (1925)
21 Marie Severin
23 Alfredo P. Alcala (1925)
23 Terry Austin (1952)
26 Brant Parker (1920)
27 Don Perlin (1929)
27 Denis Kitchen (1946)
27 Frank Kelly Freas
28 Jack Kirby (1917)
30 Robert Crumb (1943)
30 Jack C. Harris (1947)

SEPTEMBER

1 Gene Colan
1 Gaspar Saladino
2 Rick Obadiah (1948)
2 Walt Simonson
4 Paul Smith
5 Arvell Jones
8 Archie Goodwin
9 Leslie Zahler (1953)
9 Frank Robbins
10 Gerry Conway (1952)
13 Mike Grell (1947)
14 Jim Novak
15 Kim Metzger (1953)
17 Roger Stern
20 Steve Gerber (1947)
20 Steve Ringenberg (1957)
22 E. Nelson Bridwell (1931)
23 Dan Day (1956)
25 Howard Bender
25 Bob Layton
26 Louise Simonson (1946)
27 Jim Shooter (1951)
27 Bob Sharen

"Around 1938, just prior to the rise of the comics, two guys from Cleveland wrote to me — a fellow named Siegel and a fellow named Shuster. They sent me several samples of their work. One was a feature called *Spy* and the other was a feature called *Superman*. I wrote them a long letter and told them they weren't ready to come to New York, that it was a tough town and their style wasn't professional enough yet." — *Will Eisner, interviewed in* ***Changes*** *#85 (December 1973).*

—Bruce Christlip

Comic-Book Circulation Figures

These figures are the 12-month average total paid circulation figures for the titles listed, which probably best represent the true sales trends of each individual title, since many factors could affect the sales of any single issue — an anniversary issue, a fill-in by a particularly "hot" artist, etc.

It has been stated many times by various persons that these published sales figures are rough estimates at best, and are not totally reliable. However, they are the primary guide to commercial popularity we have.

Title	Publisher	12-month average total paid circulation 1983	1984	Gain or Loss
Uncanny X-Men	(Marvel)	336,824	378,135	+41,311
Fantastic Four	(Marvel)	257,298	268,568	+11,270
The Amazing Spider-Man	(Marvel)	241,762	261,064	+19,302
The Avengers	(Marvel)	229,645	241,463	+1,818
Daredevil	(Marvel)	259,013	233,580	(-25,433)
The Thing	(Marvel)	New listing	218,911	—
Conan the Barbarian	(Marvel)	206,434	205,751	(-683)
The Incredible Hulk	(Marvel)	189,337	196,567	+7,230
Peter Parker (Spectacular Spider-Man)	(Marvel)	172,290	180,498	+8,208
Star Wars	(Marvel)	180,213	179,917	(-296)
G I Joe	(Marvel)	157,920	183,466	+25,546
Iron Man	(Marvel)	187,564	177,659	(-9,905)
Thor	(Marvel)	147,735	171,290	+23,555
Red Sonja	(Marvel)	New listing	167,734	—
Rom	(Marvel)	160,741	162,090	+1,349
Archie Comics Digest	(Archie)	—	161,561	?
Captain America	(Marvel)	139,674	148,659	+8,985
Laugh Comics Digest	(Archie)	?	144,631	?
Conan the King	(Marvel)	141,669	141,537	(-132)
The Legion of Super-Heroes	(DC)	166,733	140,018	(-26,715)
The New Defenders	(Marvel)	130,463	133,723	+3,260
The Savage Sword of Conan	(Marvel)	133,285	133,689	+404
Jughead with Archie Digest	(Archie)	?	132,033	?
Archie Andrews, Where Are You? Digest	(Archie)	?	130,252	?
Doctor Strange	(Marvel)	New listing	121,574	—
Power Man and Iron Fist	(Marvel)	116,561	115,734	(-827)
Superman	(DC)	126,279	111,073	(-15,206)
Marvel Tales	(Marvel)	113,066	110,681	(-2,385)
Justice League of America	(DC)	122,397	110,664	(-11,733)
The Warlord	(DC)	111,922	101,013	(-10,909)
DC Comics Presents	(DC)	119,559	93,457	(-26,102)
Batman	(DC)	97,741	89,217	(-8,524)
Green Lantern	(DC)	89,795	87,050	(-2,745)
Action Comics	(DC)	105,394	86,422	(-18,972)
World's Finest Comics	(DC)	88,928	82,415	(-6,513)
Detective Comics	(DC)	80,725	77,275	(-3,450)
The Flash	(DC)	72,771	69,881	(-2,890)
Sgt. Rock	(DC)	81,514	69,544	(-11,870)
Archie Comics	(Archie)	69,697	64,781	(-4,916)
Archie Giant Series	(Archie)	76,375	69,013	-7,362
Archie's Girls Betty and Veronica	(Archie)	68,532	64,516	(-4,016)
Laugh Comics	(Archie)	60,408	62,319	+1,911
Betty and Me	(Archie)	64,909	61,328	-3,581
Archie and Me	(Archie)	65,139	59,836	(-5,303)
Archie's Pals 'n' Gals	(Archie)	61,713	59,442	(-2,271)
Life with Archie	(Archie)	66,111	58,704	(-7,407)
Jughead Comics	(Archie)	62,454	58,377	(-4,077)
Archie's TV Laugh-Out	(Archie)	63,297	57,857	(-5,440)
Archie at Riverdale High	(Archie)	65,789	57,357	(-8,432)
Everything's Archie	(Archie)	63,924	55,194	(-8,730)
Jonah Hex	(DC)	67,153	55,727	(-11,426)
Pep Comics	(Archie)	61,226	55,078	(-6,248)
Wonder Woman	(DC)	73,256	52,145	(-21,111)
G.I. Combat	(DC)	57,972	49,021	(-8,951)

—Greg W. Myers

SOME COMIC SERVICES CLAIM THA

SOME HISTORY. STYX COMIC SERVICE was the first major comic ser vice to advertise in the fanzine media years ago. We built a loyal following and became the largest comic service of its kind up to 1981. During that year the disastrous postal strikes really put a kibosh on us. During the time since we've made innumerable changes and improvements to the comic service to make it even BETTER than it was! We're going strong, and we're looking towards the future!

WHAT SERVICES DO WE OFFER? We supply a full line of comic books and comic-related publications to fans throughout the world. We also supply a few unrelated items such as Penthouse and Playboy but we have kept those to a minimum, concentrating on items collectors are looking for.

Most importantly: all books are sold for 20% off cover price. That's right! off the top!

HOW DOES THE SERVICE WORK? We maintain a standing order for you. Each shipping period, we run an invoice against that standing order and your books are packed and invoiced automatically. The charges are added up and deducted from your account in which you maintain your funds. It's that simple, and yet there's lots more to it! Look at these features:

1.) NO SEPARATE SECURITY DEPOSITS ARE REQUIRED. Every cent you deposit in your account goes towards buying comics and magazines.

2.) THERE ARE NO MINIMUM OR MAXIMUM ORDERS. Order one comic or one thousand comics — we'll get them to you just the same! In keeping with our policy of information, however, we do want to note that it's more economical the more titles you order. That's because postage for one comic and postage for ten comics are essentially the same. Postage goes by weight of the package you know.

3.) YOU HAVE INSTANT CREDIT BASED ON YOUR DEPOSIT. As each shipment is sent out to you you can monitor the level of your account and replenish it if necessary.

4.) IF YOU DON'T WISH TO BE BOTHERED WITH MAKING DEPOSITS, YOU CAN USE VISA. Our Visa system is excellent for a number of reasons:

a.) We operate your account automatically and you NEVER have to worry about having sufficient funds to cover shipments.

b.) U.S. AND FOREIGN CUSTOMERS TAKE NOTE: When you operate your account via VISA, it is done in CANADIAN DOLLARS at the CANADIAN COVER PRICES of the books. Often with the rules of exchange fluctuating, this may mean EXTRA savings to you when you get your VISA billing.

c.) VISA charges are done in $100 Canadian increments to minimize hassles and you receive your sales slip automatically when a charge is processed!

5.) WE'LL MATCH OUR SHIPPING CHARGES AGAINST ANYONE. Traditionally our postal charges have been low and this is maintained through operation of your account. We try to minimize the costs to give the most economical and effective service.

6.) WE CARRY AS COMPLETE A LINE OF GOODS AS POSSIBLE. Our selection has oft times been imitated, but rarely equalled. Scan the publications list below. This will be updated from time to time to keep current with the newest releases. If a title doesn't appear on that list, then likely it's not of much interest! (Or it hasn't yet appeared. The list shows only CURRENT or CONFIRMED TITLES.)

7.) OUR BOOKKEEPING IS ACCURATE AND WE MAINTAIN A COMPUTERIZED SYSTEM FOR YOU! On each and every invoice you see a statement which picks up the balance from the previous invoice. It also shows any deposits, adjustments, or changes which have taken place in your account since the last time you received goods. Everything is clear and concise and it's in plain English to make it easy to understand!

8.) OUR SCHEDULE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE! WE SHIP EVERY TWO WEEKS WITHOUT FAIL. That means that every new release we receive in each period is shipped out effectively and quickly. Everyone gets two-week service to minimize the time lag between release of a book and the time you get it!

9.) OUR SYSTEM IS FLEXIBLE. Order changing is a snap. Just drop us a note when you wish to make additions or deletions. We'll make them for you, within a day or two of receiving your written notification, and the changes will take effect with your next order! It's that easy!

10.) OUR SYSTEM IS SIMPLE! There are no complex shipping plans or combinations to choose from and you're not rated according to the number of books you take each month, week or whenever. Too much hassle!

11.) WE CARE FOR YOUR ORDER! Our desire is to get you your books in the best possible condition. Each shipment is carefully wrapped in plastic. Larger shipments are then placed in a specially designed mailing box, with ample packing and a protective bag over it. We are introducing the use of specially padded envelopes for the smaller shipments. This ensures arrival of your books in the best possible condition. That makes you happy and that makes us happy too!

12.) WE OFFER PHONE SERVICE! If you wish to avoid writing hassles, we'd be glad to hear from you in person! You can get in touch with us by phone at (204) 586-8547 24 hours a day Monday thru Friday! Make changes, ask questions, tell us your suggestions, or whatever. We wanna hear from you!

13.) WE OFFER BACK ISSUE SERVICE AT ECONOMICAL PRICES. We have 500,000 or more books to choose from which span the past 45 years. We offer good quality, good selection, and reasonable price. Oftentimes we run specials just for comic service members! Try us with your want lists. We respond!

14.) OUR "BLANKET CATEGORIES" make ordering easy! A blanket category gives you the option of ordering, for example, "ALL MARVEL FIRST ISSUES." (See the publications list.) That means that each and every first issue will be sent to you automatically! It's then easy to let us know if you wish to continue with the title, without missing an issue! And for ANNUALS the system is even better. If you choose, for example, "ALL DC ANNUALS" you'll get every one that comes out during the year! But even if you don't, our system will AUTOMATICALLY send you the annuals of the titles you collect to keep your sets complete! Can't be beat!

These are just a few of the features of our service. Read on!

What basic costs are involved again?:

You pay only for your comics at a BIG 20% discount, postage, and a small service charge per shipment. Scared? Don't be! The maximum service charge is 75¢ per shipment, and we have recently refined the system to allow for a graduated service charge for small shipments. After all, it's not fair to have one comic costing a fortune! This allows smaller collectors to get the best service possible while keeping costs to a minimum!

What EXTRAS does the service offer?

We've got plenty! Just look at these:

1.) WANT A PRICE GUIDE? OK .. we'll give you one. That's RIGHT! We said GIVE. OK — what's the catch? The only thing is that you have to be a member of the comic service for the year's period in which the guide comes out. THERE ARE NO OTHER MINIMUM ORDERS TO QUALIFY FOR A GUIDE! And what happens if you quit before the year is up? Well — we've divided the cost of the guide into 12 equal parts. If you leave the service your account will be charged for the cost remaining of the guide. It's that simple! Join now! Qualify for the 1985 price guide as soon as it's published. Don't be left out!!

2.) ARE YOU INTO PLASTIC BAGS? OK, — we experimented and found that sending books in individual bags is actually MORE dangerous than sending them without. There's greater tendency to damage that way. But we have them available, and they're top quality 2.5 mil ultra clear bags. Service members can get them for just $3.00 U.S./$4.00 Can. per hundred!

3.) Once a month you'll get the newest issue of the STYX MAGAZINE. That's something that we just started which replaces the old newsletter. It's got previews, cover repros, information on the service and the world of comics, and (hopefully) contributions from service members ... all neatly tilted into a few pages. Good reading, and it's free!

4.) EACH MONTH we send out as many promotional flyers, information sheets, etc., as we can possibly get into your package. So every second package you'll be getting more than just your comics! You'll get the latest updates and info right from the publishers!

5.) MARVEL AGE and the NEW DC COMING ATTRACTIONS are supplied free each month to members with current accounts. That's right — no cost! That's just a little extra that we give you!

What can you expect in terms of service and customer relations?:

The comic service is designed for people who are far from a local source of books. It is also useful to those who do not have the facilities to go hunting for books from place to place. It is welcomed as well by those fans who, although they have a local outlet, are disgruntled with the chores involved and the costs of buying off the rack.

We can solve your collecting problems. We cannot compete, however, in terms of speed with the local comic shops in your area. That's a drawback of dealing by long-distance and applies to any service. However with our schedule, we feel that time will not be a major consideration.

We strive to give you satisfaction. However, we are human too and sometimes a mistake might accidentally pop up. In those cases (which are rare) we will promptly correct the problem to maximize your enjoyment of the comic service. We will always send exactly what your order entails. Incidentally, EVERY THREE MONTHS you will receive a computerized listing of your current standing order, so that you may make changes or adjustments if necessary.

Of course completeness is important. We strive NEVER to miss an issue. If such a case does arise, we will get the issue for you, no matter how long it takes, or we will credit your account the appropriate sum if you so desire. If you are happy with the service, then our job is accomplished.

We will always lend a friendly and outgoing ear to your concerns and suggestions, and welcome them to better the service for all members. That's because we consider the members of our service as "family" rather than just customers, and that extra touch goes a long way!

What can you expect in terms of your responsibilities?:

Basically the only thing is to keep your account solvent. That's it. Unfortunately comic services as well as all businesses depend on cash input. Are you wondering what happens if your account goes "into the red"? We have a flexible credit plan based on your individual record with the service. We may ship your books despite the fact that your balance shows a sum owing, depending on how much it is and what your circumstances are. If we don't, however, a message to that effect is automatically printed on your invoice and we'll store the invoice until a new deposit arrives. This allows you the time and flexibility to plan your purchases. That's another example of just a little bit more service.

20% DISCOUNT
• Efficient Delivery
• Regular Shipments
• All this and lots of extras!

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_____Arak Son of Thunder
_____Aroyn
_____Avengers
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_____Batman & The Outsiders (High Quality)
_____Barren Earth
_____Blue Devil
_____Captain America
_____Cloak & Dagger
_____Conan
_____Daredevil
_____Dazzler
_____DC Challenge
_____DC Comics Presents
_____1 ***DC Comics Attractions (supplied free to all members in good standing)
_____DC Universe: Crisis on Infinite Earth
_____Deadman
_____Defenders
_____Detective Comics
_____Dr. Strange
_____Doctor Who
_____DC Who's Who
_____Dreadstar***
_____Fantastic Four
_____Firestorm
_____Flash
_____Gargoyle
_____Gemworld (Amethyst)
_____G.I. Combat
_____G.I. Joe
_____Green Lantern
_____Groo the Wanderer
_____Hex
_____Hulk
_____Infinity Inc ***
_____Iron Man
_____Fenn Son of Saturn
_____Justice League
_____Jonn Thunder
_____King Conan
_____Kull
_____LEGION OF SUPER HEROES HIGH QUALITY***
_____Legion of Super Heroes
_____1 Marvel Age (supplied FREE to all members in good standing!)
_____Marvel Fanfare***
_____Marvel Superheroes: The Secret Wars (mini-series)
_____Marvel Tales
_____The Thing
_____Microsauts (New Series)
_____Moon Knight (New Series)
_____Moonshadow
_____New Mutants
_____Omega Men***
_____New Talent Showcase
_____Power Pack
_____Powerman/Iron Fist
_____Indiana Jones
_____Red Sonja
_____Quest Probe
_____Rocket Raccoon
_____Rom
_____Sisterhood of Steel
_____Sectaurs: Warriors of Hive
_____Sgt. Rock
_____Spanner's Galaxy
_____Spectacular Spiderman
_____Spiderman
_____Spiderman Index
_____Star Trek
_____Star Wars
_____Sun Devils***
_____Starstruck
_____Superman
_____Superman Special
_____Swamp Thing
_____Sword of the Atom Special
_____Swords of the Swashbucklers
_____TEEN TITANS HIGH QUALITY***
_____Teen Titans
_____Thor
_____Time Spirits
_____Transformers
_____V
_____Vigilante***
_____Warlord
_____Web of Spiderman
_____West Coast Avengers
_____What If?
_____Wonder Woman
_____World's Finest Comics
_____X-Men
_____DC Graphic Novels
_____Marvel Graphic Novels
_____All DC Mini-Series
_____All Marvel Mini-Series

SECTION 2: STAR COMICS

_____Fragle Rock
_____Heathcliff
_____Planet Terry
_____Strawberry Shortcake
_____Top Dog
_____Wally the Wizard
_____Peter Porker
_____Ewoks
_____Get Along Gang
_____Muppet Babies
_____Royal Roy

SECTION 3: ARCHIE/RED CIRCLE COMICS

_____Archie/Red Circle First Issues
_____Archie Giant Series Magazine
_____Archie
_____Archie and Me
_____Archie at Riverdale High
_____Archie's Pals 'n' Gals
_____Archie's TV Laughout
_____Betty and Me
_____Betty and Veronica
_____Everything's Archie
_____The Fly (Red Circle)
_____Jughead
_____Katy Keene (New Series)
_____Laugh
_____Life With Archie
_____Man Tech Robot Warriors (Red Circle)
_____Mighty Crusaders (Red Circle)
_____Pep
_____Thunder Bunny (Warp)

SECTION 4: SPECIALTY AND DIRECT SALE PUBLISHERS

(Note almost ALL the items listed in this section are DIRECT SALE ONLY and so we will dispense with the asterisks for them!

_____All Eclipse First Issues
_____All First First Issues
_____All Capital First Issues
_____All Americomics First Issues
_____Crossfire (Eclipse)
_____Cap'n Quick (Eclipse)
_____Mr X (Vortex)
_____Elementals (Comico)
_____Echo of Future Past (Continuity)
_____Elric (First)
_____Groo (Epic)
_____Alien Encounters (Eclipse)
_____Aztec Ace (Eclipse)
_____DNA Agents (Eclipse)
_____Starslayer (First)
_____Somerset Holmes (Eclipse)
_____Destroyer Duck (Eclipse)
_____Nexus (First)
_____Badger (First)
_____Sabre (Eclipse)
_____Scorpia Rose (Eclipse)
_____Ms. Tree (Renegade)
_____Twisted Tales (Eclipse)
_____Whisper (First)
_____Black Diamond (Americomics)
_____Capt. Paragon (Americomics)
_____Masked Man (Eclipse)
_____Night Music (Eclipse)
_____Sun Runner (Pacific)
_____AZ
_____Comico Primer (Comico)
_____Evangeline (Comico)
_____Mage (Comico)
_____Post Brothers
_____Tales of Thunder
_____Thunder Agents (Deluxe Valentino, Renegade)
_____Zor (Eclipse)
_____American Flagg First,
_____E-Man First)
_____Jon Sable First)
_____Grimjack First)

SECTION 5 BRITISH/EAGLE COMICS

_____2000 A.D. Weekly
_____Captain Britain Magazine
_____Doctor Who Monthly
_____Judge Dredd***
_____Robohunter***
_____Starlord
_____2000 A.D. Monthly
_____Warrior Magazine

SECTION 6 COMIC DIGESTS

_____All DC Digests
_____All Archie Digests
_____Archie Where R U ? Digest
_____Archie Comics Digest
_____Best of DC Digest
_____Archie Double Digest
_____Betty/Veronica Comic Digest
_____Jokebook Comics Digest
_____Jughead Jones Digest
_____Jughead With Archie Digest
_____Laugh Comics Digest
_____Little Archie Digest

SECTION 7: ALTERNATIVE COMICS, FANZINES, AND MAGAZINES

_____Amazing Stories (sf,
_____Amazing Heroes (Fantagraphics)
_____Analog (sf)
_____Black Zeppelin
_____Cerebus the Aardvark (Aardvark Vanaheim)
_____Cerebrus Jam
_____Cinefantastique (film)
_____Cinelex (film)
_____Cinemagic (film, Starlog)
_____Comics Collector (Krause)
_____Comics Interview (Fictioneer)
_____Comics Journal (Fantagraphics)
_____Distant Soil (Warp)
_____Don Rosa's Comics (Fantagraphics)
_____Eliquest (Warp)
_____Epic Magazine (Marvel)
_____Fangoria (Starlog)
_____First Kingdom (Plant)
_____Flaming Carrot (Renegade)
_____Heavy Metal
_____Heavy Metal Specials
_____Isaac Asimov (sf)
_____Journey (Fantagraphics)
_____Love and Rockets (Fantagraphics)
_____Mad
_____Mad Specials
_____Marvel Comics Index Series (Pacific)
_____Marvel Super Special (Marvel)
_____National Lampoon
_____National Lampoon Specials
_____Neil the Horse (Aardvark Vanaheim)
_____Nemo (Fantagraphics)
_____Next Man (Comico)
_____Normal Man (Renegade, Omni)
_____Omni Specials
_____Post Brothers (Vortex)
_____Prevue Magazine (Supergraphics)
_____Savage Sword of Conan (Marvel)
_____Spiral Color Comic (Kitchen Sink Capital)
_____Starlog Magazine
_____Steve Canyon (Kitchen Sink)
_____Stig's Inferno (Vortex)
_____Swords of Cerebus (Aardvark-Vanaheim)
_____Valentino (Renegade)
_____Vortex (Vortex pubs)
_____W II Eisner Quarterly (Kitchen Sink)

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Top Titles of the Winter

This list shows the top 10 titles (from #1 to #10) for each month of the winter, as indicated by dealers' orders from Capital City Distribution, Inc., in Madison, Wis. While it is an indication of how well the titles sold in comics shops, other distributors' figures may differ.

January

X-Men #193	*New Mutants* #27
Web of Spider-Man #2	*New Teen Titans* #8
Crisis on Infinite Earths #2	*Fantastic Four* #278
Who's Who #3	*Amazing Spider-Man* #264
Alpha Flight #22	*Tales of The Teen Titans* #53

February

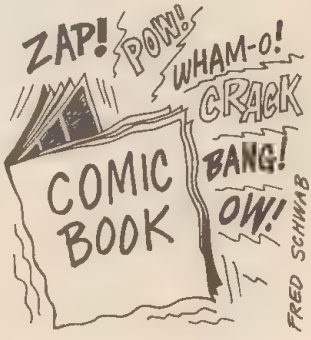
X-Men #194	*New Mutants* #28
Crisis on Infinite Earths #3	*Moon Knight* #1
Cloak and Dagger #1	*New Teen Titans* #9
Web of Spider-Man #3	*Fantastic Four* #279
Alpha Flight #23	*Amazing Spider-Man* #265

March

Secret Wars II #1	*Alpha Flight* #24
X-Men #195	*Who's Who* #5
Crisis on Infinite Earths #4	*New Mutants* #29
Web of Spider-Man #4	*Fantastic Four* #280
Cloak and Dagger #2	*New Teen Titans* #10

April

Secret Wars II #2	*Alpha Flight* #25
X-Men #196	*Who's Who* #6
Crisis on Infinite Earths #5	*Fantastic Four* #281
Web of Spider-Man #5	*Iron Man* #197
New Mutants #30	*Amazing Spider-Man* #267



Jim Shooter on comic books: "It's a good profession, but I wouldn't want to spend my whole life there." — *from a June 1969 interview conducted by Doug Fratz for his fanzine,* ***Comicology.***

—Don Martinec

GETTING ORGANIZED

You may already have some crazy method of filing your comic collection. If it works for you, that's fine. But, as your collection grows larger, you may have trouble remembering all of your little arbitrary decisions, and you'll need a system you can stick to strictly. People usually sort their comics by size and publisher, and alphabetize them by the *indicia title* in *letter order*. The indicia title is the title that appears in capital letters in small type at the bottom of Page 1. "Letter order" alphabetizes titles as if they were all one long word. This is the method that Overstreet uses, so you can check his *Price Guide* if you can't remember where you filed something. If you can't remember where you filed the *Price Guide*, I can't help you.

It's an amazing thing, but most collectors don't seem to keep their comics in any sort of order at all. They pile them in mixed stacks and heaps and boxes and drawers. How in the world do they find anything, anyway? Constant shuffling through mountains of back issues can cause wear and tear on your collectors' items, and there's always the danger of being buried in a "comicslide" of *She-Hulks* and *G.I. Combats*. It won't take more than a weekend, so put those things in order!

And use your brain. The first time I organized my collection, I ended up filing everything under "*The*."

Do make some sort of list of the comics you have; at the very least you should make a "want list" of the specific issue numbers you are looking for. Cross off the issues as you buy them, before you file them. (I use the comic-book file cards you may have seen advertised, which have a space to record a back issue's condition.) Put your name, address, and phone number on the list or file box — you *will* lose it sooner or later. On the cards you can make notes of artists, special issues, or the last issue of a series.

Don't trust your memory! The larger your collection gets, the more tricks your mind will play on you. I once ended up with three copies of *Tomb of Dracula* #16 when I really wanted #15. *Don't forget* your lists when you go to a convention or shop. And don't let your purchases pile up too long before adding them to the bulk of your collection, it's like playing with a time bomb.

—By Beppe Sabatini

Buying Old Comics

Hunting down back issues is the most challenging part of collecting for many comics fans — and probably the most expensive. If you're lucky enough to live near a comic shop, you can stop in every few weeks and eventually find everything you need (though it may take months). If you can go to a large convention, it's worth the trip, even if it means driving several hours to go to New York or San Diego. And if you can't do either, you should subscribe to *The Comics Buyer's Guide*, a weekly newspaper with thousands of back issues for sale. It is hard to find true "mint" copies, unless you get a look at a nice collection before it is offered up for general sale and handling.

Small, one-day conventions can be helpful, especially when you're a beginner. Eventually, you may decide to save your money for the large events; the small ones are fun at first, but you will soon begin to see the same dealers with the same stock every month. And don't expect to find a garage sale or abandoned attic filled with hundreds of Golden Age issues — it's a wonderful fantasy, but it's almost certainly not going to happen to you.

Do shop around, *do* compare prices, *do* try to get the best deal for your money. There is no "true" value for a comic; the Overstreet *Price Guide* is only a *guide*. The actual worth of a back issue is whatever the market will bear — that is, whatever someone is willing to pay for it. You will find an enormous difference in prices from city to city and from dealer to dealer. And these prices are not carved in stone; dealers are sometimes willing to lower prices for you on slow-moving merchandise. On the other hand, don't expect any deals on the hot-selling new fad — if you really want to collect *The New Teen Titans*, you may find the market value is *more* than the *Guide* price. Check condition carefully to make sure that back issues haven't been "overgraded."

If you think a comic is overpriced — *don't buy it!* It sounds obvious, but all too many fans will buy it anyway and walk away feeling cheated. Then again, if you've been looking for *X-Men* #63 for four years, you may feel it's really *worth* twice the *Guide* price when you finally find it. But don't buy on impulse — wait to see whether it still looks so appealing when the thrill of discovery has faded. If you're buying for investment, get the best condition copies possible — but if you're buying to read (a sensible attitude) you can now get "good" copies for one-sixth of the "mint" price.

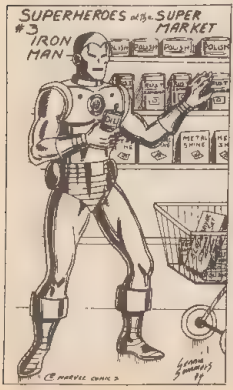
And avoid collecting fads — you'll get soaked in the worst possible way and be stuck with a case of white elephants when the fad cools.

—By Beppe Sabatini

The 'Funnies'

"The word "funnies," so popular today with the majority of people who actually read comics, was originated by the kids in the early 1900s. They referred to the big, gaily colored comics sections, which they looked forward to reading every Sunday, as the "funny papers." Soon the grown-ups were speaking of the "funnies," too. But, even as used today, the word tends to refer more to Sunday than to daily comics." — *Coulton Waugh, in his book,* ***The Comics*** *Published by Macmillan in 1947.*

—Greg W. Myers



Shake Your Brain

"If I sit there and nothing is coming to me, I'll usually just start to draw regardless if there's any meaning to it. Sometimes that will create ideas. I sometimes think that— You know those little crystal balls that you shake up and the snow falls? That's how I think my brain works sometimes. You just kind of sit there and shake it and wait and see how things settle. If nothing comes, you shake it again."

— *Gary Larson, cartoonist of* ***The Far Side****, interviewed in* ***City Limits Gazette*** *#10.*

— Bruce Chrislip

Who are we?

Answers below

① SUPERMAN ② HUMAN TORCH ③ POPEYE
④ UNCLE SCROOGE ⑤ SPIDERMAN ⑥ THE THING

Funnies in the 40's

Part 3: PAPER BULLETS

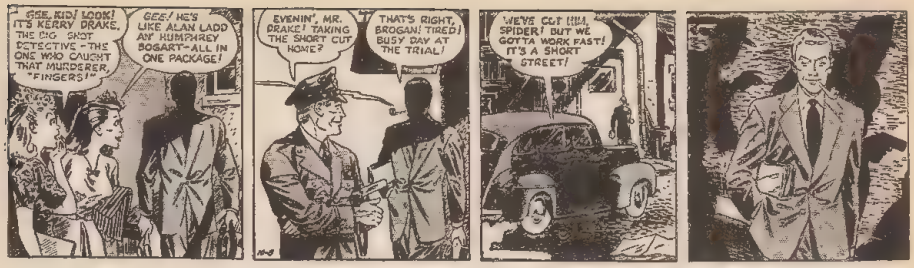
Ron Goulart

The '30s had seen cops and G-Men come shooting their way into the comics sections, with Dick Tracy, Red Barry, and Secret Agent X-9 among the most notable.

The detectives who came along during the next decade were a different breed: private detectives for the most part, men who preferred to work outside the system. Some were tough guys; some leaned toward the intellectual approach to detection; and a few were just plain silly. We'll be meeting them all in this installment.

Before we get to the first new detective of the '40s, it's necessary to consider the final days of an operative who began his crimebusting career back in the '30s. *Dan Dunn* had been created, if that's the word, by Norman Marsh late in 1933 as the Publishers Syndicate answer to *Dick Tracy*. Marsh, a man of limited talent but considerable drive, had become a professional cartoonist after having been a Marine, a prizefight promoter, and an agent for the Treasury Department.

His Dan Dunn possessed a profile



Above is a strip from the first week of ***Kerry Drake****, which began in October 1943 from Publishers Syndicate. The strip replaced the syndicate's* ***Dan Dunn****. Below is an introductory strip designed for a paper which picked up the strip in mid-story.*

that, except for a squarer chin, was identical to that of Tracy. His sidekick was a variation of Pat Patton, being fatter, dumber, and named Irwin Higgs The plots mixed the hardboiled and the melodramatic. The drawing was godawful, yet at the height of its success *Dan Dunn* was appearing in 135 newspapers.

Marsh, with the help of an assortment of assistants, kept the strip going into the '40s. When he heard radio reports of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, he made up his mind to get back into the service. "That afternoon I wired the Marine Corps in Washington, and three months later I was on my way to the South Pacific with a commission."

Allen Saunders, who took over the writing of the detective strip, has a different version of the reason Marsh gave up *Dan Dunn*. "Marsh had had a bitter argument with the syndicate partners . . . and had stormed out of the office slamming the door so hard he shattered the glass," he recalled.

Paul Pinson, later a successful advertising artist, was Saunders' first partner. He took the strip away from its awkward cartoony look and brought it closer to the Caniff school. The next artist brought it all the way there.

Alfred Andriola was fresh from a four-year stint of doing *Charlie Chan* — followed by a brief filing in comics books with *Captain Triumph* — when he took over *Dan Dunn* in January 1943.

Andriola told how this job came about many times during his lifetime. "I was approached by Publishers Syndicate to take over their *Dan Dunn* strip," he once explained. "I said I was only interested in starting a detective character of my own." A compromise was reached and "if I finished their existing contracts with newspapers on *Dunn*, I could concurrently work on my own character."

Dan was sent off to war on Sunday, October 3, 1943. The next day *Kerry Drake* began appearing in his slot. Andriola said he enjoyed doing both the earlier detective strips, but not "as much as *Kerry Drake*, who, after all, was my creation."

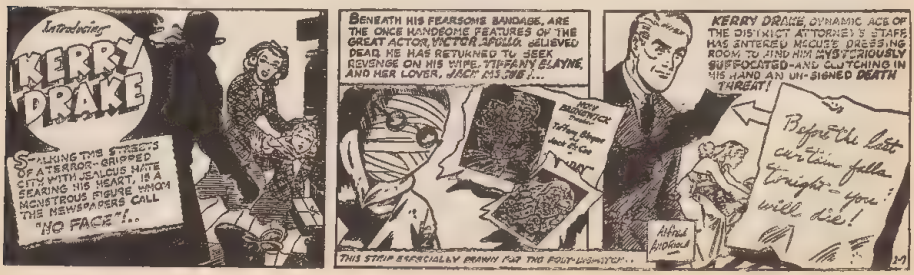
Saunders gives a somewhat different account of the conception and birth of the white-haired sleuth. "Eventually, to avoid possible steps by Marsh to recover his abandoned property, it was decided to substitute in client papers an entirely new strip, *Kerry Drake*. In 1943 this step was taken, with the loss of very few papers. As an artist partner I was teamed with Alfred Andriola, a Greenwich Village resident." Saunders indicated he did not find the relationship especially pleasant. "Andriola demanded credit for the writing as well as the art work and in all publicity identified himself as the sole creator of *Drake*. We differed often on plots and dialogue, exchanging arumentative letters or wrangling over the phone."

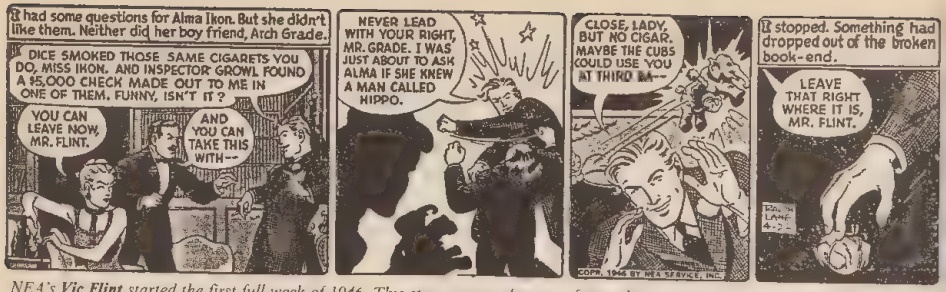
Despite a less than harmonious team, *Kerry Drake* was a first-rate strip in its early years. The Andriola version of the Caniff style, achieved with the help of a variety of assistants, was attractive and made the new strip look considerably more sophisticated than any of its older cops and robber competitors.

Saunders' continuities, using villains that now and then must've made even Chester Gould a shade envious — Fingers, No Face, Dr. Zero, Bottleneck, Stitches, Mother Whistler, etc. — were good, and he knew how to build suspense just about as well as anybody in the business.

Drake's occupation was somewhat vague in the initial sequences. Promotional material described him as "a keen-witted, cotton-topped private investigator who is attached to the staff of the district attorney." He operated out of his own office and had a pretty secretary, Sandy Burns, and a redheaded office boy known as Firetop.

Eventually Drake lost his private status and seemed to be working directly with the D.A. Still later, he became a





NEA's ***Vic Flint*** *started the first full week of 1946. This strip appeared in one of its earliest sequences.*

police detective.

The strip was a successful one and lasted for 40 years. The syndicate decided to cancel it only after Andriola's death.

1946 was the year of the private eye. That summer *The Big Sleep*, with Bogart as Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe, opened in movie palaces around the country. That autumn, *The Adventures of Sam Spade*, with Howard Duff as Hammett's hardboiled sleuth, began its radio run on CBS. Earlier in the year two private eyes made their debuts on the comics pages. One was a tough, hardboiled type, the other more cerebral. Both of them, interestingly enough, were former Marines.

Vic Flint introduced himself on Sunday, January 6. Like many a private-eye novel, including all those of Chandler and most of Hammett's, Flint's adventures were told in the first person. The initial daily commenced: "The whole thing started late one afternoon. I was sitting in my office reading the papers about a killing. And then my door opened." Flint was a good-looking blond guy. He went in for herringbone suits and snapbrim hats, and there was almost always a cigaret between his lips. He was fond of wisecracks, went along with the cops, but didn't take any guff from them.

His world was a somewhat watered-down version of the one to be found in the *film noir* mysteries of the period, filled with cigar-chomping cops, oily gangsters, blonde showgirls, crooked politicans, glittery nightclubs, and dark alleys.

The artist on *Vic Flint* was Ralph Lane, a former gag cartoonist who'd spent his last few years assisting Roy Crane on *Buz Sawyer*. His style was a shade more realistic than Crane's, and he liked to do detailed long shots that established the strip's various locales. The writing was credited to Michael O'Malley, but this was actually a pen-name for NEA syndicate feature editor Ernest "East" Lynn.

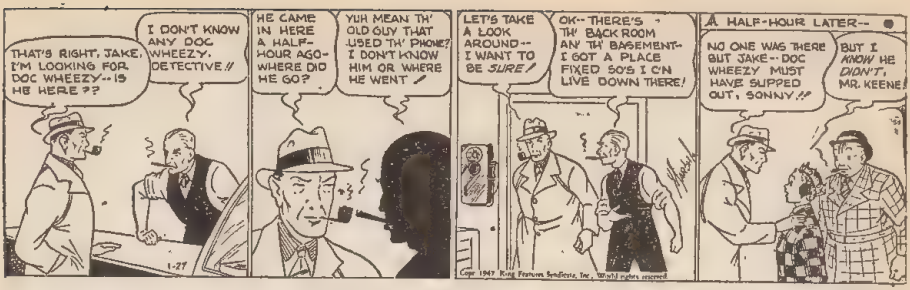
Lane was rather abruptly relieved of his duties in the autumn of 1950. In fact, he disappeared in the midst of the Sunday page for October 8, and his successor provided the final panel. Dean Miller was a man of lesser talent who had been drawing a Sunday page entitled *Mighty O'Malley* for the Chicago *Tribune*. The Flint strip did not thrive under his pen.

Another Marine, recently back from the Pacific, set up shop as a private detective two months after Vic Flint. Rip Kirby, however, was an intellectual — we knew that right off, since he wore glasses — and definitely upper-class.

He lived in a posh Manhattan apartment, complete with grand piano and British valet. He was a golfer and had a blonde ladyfriend who was pretty enough and slender enough to be hired as a fashion model before the strip was two weeks old

Alex Raymond, just out of the Marine Corps himself, took sole credit for the strip. Actually he did little of the writing. The original notion came from King Features editor Ward Green — author of several mystery novels, including *Death in the Deep South* and *The Havana Hotel Murders* — and Fred Dickenson was signed on as script-writer fairly early. Raymond's style had changed considerably since he'd abandoned *Flash Gordon* in the spring of 1944. He no longer went in for heroic tableaus and melodramatic action. *Rip Kirby* was much more relaxed and realistic. Raymond seemed intent on proving he could draw people in natural poses and settings and was capable of indicating character and attitude a great deal more subtly than he had in the days of Ming the Merciless.

The strip was impressively well drawn in its first years. Raymond had long wanted to be a magazine illustrator and in *Rip Kirby* he demonstrated he could compete with the best of them. The continutities themselves were never quite



(Above.) ***Dan Dunn*** *creator Norman Marsh also created* ***Hunter Keene*** *for King Features in 1946. (Below:) Alex Raymond, already known to comic-strip fans for his* ***Flash Gordon****, produced the detective strip* ***Rip Kirby*** *for King Features*

as good as the pictures that went with them, modest reworkings for the most part of the kind of plots to be found in B-movies of a decade or so earlier.

There were always interesting characters, though: Honey Dorian, Rip's blonde girlfriend; Desmond, his Jeeves-like man; the loathesome villain known as the Manlger; Pagan Lee, the gunmoll with a heart of gold, etc. Raymond was killed in 1956, while test-driving the car of his colleague Stan Drake. The strip was taken over by John Prentice and continues to this day.

As was noted earlier, Dan Dunn retired to make way for the silverhaired Kerry Drake. Newspaper readers, however, had not seen the last of Dunn. In the spring of 1946 he returned under a new name and for a new syndicate. Norman Marsh, fresh out of the Marines and as brashly inept as ever, managed to sell King Features a daily strip entitled *Hunter Keene*. Police detective Keene had the same profile as Dunn, the same Dick Tracy hat. He even had the same sidekick, a fat dimwitted fellow who smoked a cigar and wore a derby. Irwin Higgs in the original version, he was now known as Blimpy. The strip succumbed a few days before its first birthday.

Detective strips showed up in some unusual places in the post-war years. The New York Herald Tribune Syndicate, after decades of bland domestic humor with the likes of *Mr. & Mrs.* and *Clarence* and animal whimsy with *Peter Rabbit*, took a fling with mystery and adventure.

In the waning years of the '40s, under the editorship of Harold Straubing, the syndicate started offering its customers action and intrigue. Straubing, a man recalled with a minimum of fondness by many of those who worked with him, had acquired the job of comics editor by convincing the sedate old syndicate its list of comic strips was in need of revision. He was responsible for the addition of two detective strips, *Bodyguard* and *The Saint*.

Bodyguard should've been a hit. It was well written and impressively drawn. The continuity was by Lawrence Lariar, gag cartoonist, editor, and sometime mystery novelist. His *The Man With The Lumpy Nose*, about murder in the comics world, had won Dutton's Red Badge prize. The artwork was by John Spranger, who had some pretty fair credits himself. A graduate of comic books, he'd worked in the Binder shop and then gone on to Quality where he drew Plastic Man and Dollman. When Will Eisner returned to the weekly *Spirit* in 1946, Spranger went to work for him and did quite a bit of drawing. By the time he took on *Bodyguard*, he'd blended the Eisner inking and inventive breakdowns, the Jack Cole approach to action, and his own natural ability into a highly effective style. Intially a Sunday-only feature, *Bodyguard* began appearing on May 2, 1948.

Its star Ben Friday was, like many comic-strip heroes of the period, a returning serviceman. In the first sequence his old OSS commanding officer helped Friday set up as a freelance bodyguard-private investigator by arranging for him to protect an eccentric millionaire named Hyram Tucker. Tucker had a lovely redhaired granddaughter named Linda and a rare One Cent British Guiana postage stamp that rival collectors were willing to kill for. To show you how inflation, recession, etc., have changed our ideas of what constitutes wealth — everyone was awed by the fact that the stamp is worth the incredible sum of $50,000.

This initial caper took Friday to an assortment of dangerous locales and concluded on a mysterious island ruled by an ex-Nazi who was a dead ringer

for his client. There was plenty of action, intrigue, and romance — plus some comedy and a dandy explosion.

Later assignments involved him in shipboard dangers, treks through the jungles of India, etc. On one of his adventures Friday aided a pudgy and highly intelligent little boy known as The Bantam Prince, little realizing that the ingratiating tyke would eventually oust him from his own strip.

A daily was added in 1949 and in the summer of that year *Bodyguard* became *Ben Friday*. So far so good, but in October 1950 the title changed to *The Bantam Prince*. Early the following month Friday sailed out of the strip, in the company of a pretty blonde young woman, and was seen no more. Spranger stayed on for another year and then, as will be detailed below, moved on. The artwork for the strip's final years was by the late Carl Pfeuffer.

The Saint began as a daily strip in September 1948, adding a Sunday page the next year. Simon Templar, the Robin Hood of modern crime, came along in 1928 in Leslie Charteris' novel *Meet The Tiger*. In the '30s and '40s the enterprising Charteris managed to have The Saint translated into several other media, including movies, radio, and comic books. The continuities on the newspaper strip were actually written by Charteris. The artist was Mike Roy, another comic book veteran. He'd ghosted the *Sub-Mariner* and done quite a bit of true-crime stuff in a style that was a variation of Dan Barry's. The quality of his work fluctuated, being somewhat dependent on his inkers. The best period occured when Jack Davis served in that capacity.

The first week showed Templar and his lowbrow sidekick, Hoppy Uniatz, rescuing a little girl from kidnappers. Then there was a segue into a sequence about a fat villain named Jolly Joe who was running a protection racket with nightclub showgirls. Those who didn't co-operate got acid in the face. The story ended with Jolly Joe getting shot with his own acid gun, after the Saint had rigged it to backfire.

Charteris varied his continuties, using spoiled heiresses who were being victimized by hoodlums, searches for pirate gold, stolen chemical-biological weapons, foreign intrigue in mythical kingdoms, etc.

When Mike Roy left the feature in 1951, Spranger stepped in. He modified his style for the job, moving away from his Eisner days. Later on in the '50s The Saint, who'd first appeared as a clean-shaven chap, took to sporting a rather satanic van dyke beard. Spranger stayed on until 1959, when, following a few weeks of ghosting by Bob Lubbers, the strip was turned over to Doug Wildey. It ended in the early '60s. Gil Kane had been picked to carry on after Wildey, but the syndicate decided the strip's diminishing list of papers didn't make it worth continuing.

Another well known detective was to be seen in the funnies in the '40s — but only to sell hair tonic.

Sam Spade made his debut in 1929, when the pulp *Black Mask* serialized Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*. The latest movie version, starring Bogart, had appeared in 1941. And, as noted, the radio show took to the airwaves in 1946. The sponsor was Wildroot Cream Oil, and in the late '40s it also advertised by way of a *Sam Spade* Sunday page. This ran about once a month and was handsomely drawn and not too brightly written. The artist was Lou Fine, another recent graduate of comic books.

Several other lesser detective and crime strips appeared in the '40s, among them *Thirty Paige*, *Lance Lawson*, and *Judge Wright*. This last was a rather meanminded and violent strip that was drawn, in turn, by three comic-book artists — Bob Fujitani, Fred Kida, and George Roussos.

All the detectives we've talked about, with the exception of Rip Kirby, have vanished. And no decade since the '40s has seen the advent of so many of them.

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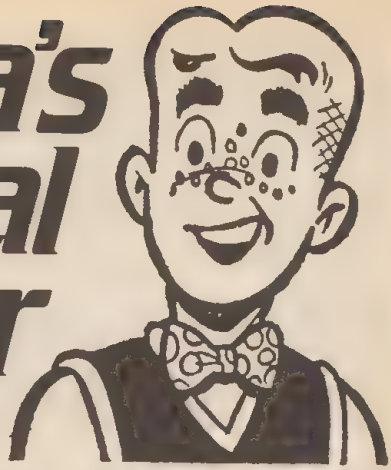
(Opposite:) ***Bodyguard*** *featured freelance bodyguard and private eye Ben Friday in exciting, well-drawn stories. (Above:) The British Saint, a Robin Hood of modern crime, first appeared in a novel by Leslie Charteris in 1928. The character was so successful Charteris did more novels and short stories about him — and eventually even a comic strip. (Below:) Dashiell Hammett's Sam Spade made it into comic strips via comic-strip commercials for Wildroot Cream Oil.*

America's typical teen-ager



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By Walter Irwin

Summer, 1960: I'm sitting on the steps of my house with my best friend, Larry Moreland. Spread out between us is *Archie's Pals 'n' Gals* # 14, which I've just purchased at Trice's Super Market. Larry and I are (as kids used to do) reading the stories out loud, swapping off the Archie and Reggie characters and the hated "girls' parts." About halfway through the issue, we're interrupted by a sneering adult's voice:

"Aren't you kids getting a little too old to be reading comic books?"

We glance up to see one of my uncles glaring down at us. As we're both only about 10 years old — and of the generation which expects swift, slapping justice for talking back — we only mutter something in response on the order of "I guess so."

We, of course, don't think we're too old to be reading comic books, but, when confronted by such implacable disdain, the wisest course is always capitulation. So I toss the *Pals 'n' Gals* into the comics box that sits by my television, and we amble off to play Army or Cowboys or Cops and Robbers or some other more socially acceptable pastime.

That was 24 years ago. (Aside: That copy of *Pals 'n' Gals* vanished. Maybe my uncle trashed it, maybe I just lost it — but it wasn't until Houstoncon '81 that I was able to find another copy and finish reading the doggone thing!)

My uncle is long dead now, but, if he were still around and still chiding children for doing what comes naturally, I'd have the response I couldn't (and wouldn't) have given him back in '60: "Nope, the age of 10 — or 11 or 12 — is *not* too old to be reading comics . . . especially *Archie* comics. As a matter of fact, it's the *perfect* age . . . For an adolescent wants nothing more in this world than to be a *teen-ager* . . . to date, to drive cars, to spend time with his friends without the presence or interference of adults. Heck, that's what *Archie* comics are *for*!"

To a youngster plodding through his last years of elementary school, rebuffed by older brothers and sisters, feeling the first stirrings of his sexual identity, the teen years seem to be a time of unlimited freedom, privileges, and opportunity. *Archie* comics were a vicarious means of safely enjoying teen pleasures and perks without risking the wrath of parents or teachers or, worse, older siblings, all of whom took a dim view of anyone trying to "grow up too fast."

Archie comics served as guidelines for the behavioral patterns and class structure we would be facing in a few years. And, if our teens didn't turn out to be quite as much fun or not quite as exciting and a helluva lot less free than *Archie* comics promised and predicted, well . . . We didn't know or worry about the psychological and sociological ramifications back then, anyway, for no matter how alluringly *Archie* comics might have painted teenage life, we wouldn't have bought and read them if they weren't funny. And they were — very.

Archie comics were among the funniest books published during the '40s, '50s, and early '60s, matched in popularity and consistency only by the Barks *Donald Duck* and *Uncle Scrooge* comic books, John Stanley's *Little Lulu*, and DC's bizarre *Fox and the Crow*. Among the similar types of "teen" titles, literally hundreds of which were on the market, nothing else even came close.

Like the Duck and Lulu titles, comics featuring Archie and his gang concentrated first on storytelling and crisp, clean artwork. The stories were not simply a gamut of jokes or pratfalls through which the characters were run at top speed. The humor grew naturally out of the characters themselves and their reactions to events and each other. While many other strips followed this formula, none were as successful. To understand why, we must look at the origins and basic philosophy underlying *Archie* comics.

Archie is one of the few successful "committee characters" to emerge from the highly disorganized, fractious world of '40s comics publishing. Most other lasting and highly popular creations from that era (or even earlier) were the product of independent, individualistic creators (*Superman, Captain Marvel, Captain America*) or were adapted from other media (*Mickey Mouse, The Lone Ranger, Dick Tracy*). Usually, company-directed creation ended up giving us such scintillating characters as *The Angel, Marvel Boy*, and *Rulah*, to name just a few.

Archie, thanks to imagination and careful planning at the very beginning, began a notch above average and soon rose to the level of hilarity and relative sophistication at which it would remain for almost 25 years.

Originally envisioned as a backup feature designed primarily to break up the tedium engendered by MLJ's roster of successful but unexciting super-heroes, *Archie* was frankly based in large part upon the lines of the (then) tremendously popular *Andy Hardy* series films. (Even the main "gimmick" of the *Archie* series, that Archie would be continually torn between two rival girlfriends, was a mainstay of the *Hardy* films.) MLJ Publisher John Goldwater Sr. and *Pep Comics* Editor Harry Shorten worked out the basics of the series, and the first story was then assigned to writer Vic Bloom and artist Bob Montana.

For many years it was widely believed that Bob Montana single-handedly created *Archie*, a misapprehension brought about mainly by the success of the *Archie* newspaper strip, which has always been more widely circulated and read than the comic books. Although the contributions of Bob Montana to the series cannot be overlooked, it is incorrect to state that he created the series. What Montana *did* do was to design the distinctive look of the characters and their world — a design which (largely under Montana's guidance) matured and developed throughout the '40s and early '50s, until it became the classic "Archie look" which remains virtually unchanged until this day.

What Bob Montana achieved in his design of the *Archie* strips (in both comics and newspapers) was a (then) unique style of artwork which perfectly complimented the humorous situations with cartoony, slapstick, even often "bigfoot" art, while at the same time rendering realistic and complimentary facial expressions, postures, props, clothing, and hairstyles.

(In later years, clothing and hairstyles were to become particularly important, for many young girls' tastes in clothes and, more importantly, their sense of how they should look and act as a stylish, "in" teen was formed as much by careful scrutiny of Betty and Veronica as it was by exposure to peers. Indeed, many adolescents in rural areas, both male and female, got their first look at current fads and fashions in an *Archie* comic, for not only were the creators based in New York (where almost all news, fashions, fancies, etc. originated during the '50s), but they obviously kept close tabs on what was happening in the teen subculture.)

Thanks to Montana, *Archie* comics gained a distinctive and attractive look to which readers immediately responded. Although the characters had

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cartoon faces, seldom (and *never* without story justification) did the facial expressions contort into grotesque exaggeration, such as popping eyeballs or impossibly wide mouths. The anatomy of the characters, with certain exceptions, was realistic and in proportion, both to each other and to the surroundings. Backgrounds and props were cleanly and often realistically delineated with a minimum of detail. And violent physical action, like facial expression, was held to a bare minimum — used only to make a telling visual point or perfectly cap a joke.

All of this was nothing new, of course. The same techniques had been created and refined over many years by syndicated newspaper comic-strip artists. *Blondie, Thimble Theater, L'il Abner*, and many, many others each offered textbook examples of clean, unexaggerated, economical storytelling and visual humor. It is to Bob Montana's credit that he was able to adapt the best of this to a completely different kind of strip while maintaining his own, unique style in the process. Small wonder that, once he began drawing the *Archie* daily and Sunday newspaper strip, it was an immediate success, as well as highly respected in the industry.

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This style was perfectly suited to the series which could, and did, cover a wide range of story-telling, from the realistic to the fantastic, from slapstick humor to deadly serious moralizing. It is no accident that almost every "teen" character (and many that weren't teens or teen-oriented, such as *Millie the Model*) aped Montana's basic designs.

The development of such a suitable and enduring style took time, however, and the Archie that made his debut in *Pep Comics* #22, cover-dated December 1941, was in appearance quite unlike the well-known and immediately recognizable Archie Andrews we grew up with.

Archie, Betty, and Jughead were the only three members of what would soon become the regular cast to appear in the premiere episode. Archie was extremely buck-toothed (this would remain for some years; one of Reggie's favorite insults for Archie in the '50s was "Rabbit Teeth"), had very prominent "chipmunk cheeks," and was very gangly. One can only think of a hamster crossed with Mickey Rooney

Betty, who had just moved into the neighborhood and introduced herself to Archie (already she bore the look of one permanently, hopelessly smitten), had her familiar bangs and curls, and Jughead had his beanie and sweater with the ever-present, mysterious "S." Archie insisted that everyone call him "Chick," claiming he hated the name Archie — and Archibald is, of course, unthinkable. This little bit of ill-considered characterization didn't last long. Somebody apparently realized that it didn't make much sense to have the title character constantly referred to by another name.

Surprisingly, Archie and his friend all appeared to be only about 12 years old. But for the adolescently nubile Betty, one might even have believed them four or five years younger still, so childish are their antics, dress and speech patterns.

Perhaps Bloom and Montana were hedging their bets by restricting Archie and his friends, at least for a while, to that nebulous age known as the "preteen," wherein the joys and follies of childhood have not yet been abandoned, yet interest in such teen activities as dating and driving is beginning to grow. Shorten must have been quick to realize this would also expand story possibilities, so soon the kids were growing at an amazing rate, and in a few short months were full-fledged teens, albeit a

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year or two younger than they would be portrayed in the '50s and '60s.

Many of the elements which would account for the strip's future success were evident in this first outing, however. The story-line, while somewhat improbable (Archie performed in a carnival tightrope-walking act to impress Betty), was fast-paced and passably funny. More important, several of the themes which would later serve as the basis for entire stories — indeed, themes which would soon be part of the *Archie* mythos — were present in this first story. Archie's cocksureness and brashness, as well as his willingness to go to any lengths to win his fair maiden; Betty's naive and sweetly patient adoration of Archie; Jughead's distaste for and distrust of girls, the merest hint of the sputtering fury that Archie's father, Fred Andrews, would suffer many times, and Archie's uncanny talent for getting into trouble with his girlfriend's father. (In this case, it was Betty's father — weirdly depicted as an old man — but the classic confrontations with Mr. Lodge were soon to appear.)

It was an admirable first effort. The few awkward elements were soon abandoned and the successful ones strengthened. For example, Grandfather Andrews, obviously intended to be a confidant to Archie and a buffer between him and the adult world, just didn't work out and quickly vanished. Also, the series moved subtly from stories which focused on Archie's home life to more stories featuring him and the gang at school and participating in sports, social activities, etc. In short order, Archie and his friends developed (a word which can very aptly be applied to the girls in particular!) into the typical teenage Riverdale High-Schoolers they remain today.

(If you are wondering, Archie, Reggie, and the rest of the guys are all 16, Betty, Veronica, and the rest of the girls are all 15½. The kids are old enough to date, drive cars, stay out unsupervised by parents, etc., but still young enough to be relatively unconcerned about college, jobs, or other worrisome aspects of the future or adult life.)

As a matter of fact, that first *Archie* story could easily be retold today, so functional and versatile was the formula devised by Archie's creators. Such a reworking would have to include — of course! — Veronica and Reggie, for any *Archie* story worth its salt must make *some* use of the unique combination of sexual tension and fumble-footed buffoonery engendered by the Archie-Betty/Reggie-Veronica quadrangle of interlocking personalities.

The cover of the March 1950 ***Pep*** *showed the continuing theme of many Archie stories. It was drawn by the late Bob Montana, who also drew the comic strips and single-character illustrations which accompany this article.*

Even in those stories that did not concern themselves with dating or rivalry over the girls, the interplay of the individual characteristics of Archie and his pals 'n' gals dictate to the tiniest detail the course of events and eventual resolution. Such internal consistency of characters and characterization (not always the same thing) is rare in any kind of long-running fictional format; when found in a comic book, especially a "kid's" comic book, it is little short of amazing.

This is not to say that all of the stories presented during the "prime" *Archie* period (mid 50's to early 60's) slavishly followed a formula. Indeed, many of the most successful and funniest intentionally ignored or warped characterization in favor of story. What *did* remain consistent throughout the entire run of the series (and into the present) was that a reader could count on Archie and his gang being the same nine times out of 10. Thus, they became familiar, trusted friends, who, like our friends in real life, often acted strangely or inconsistently, but always snapped back to normal in a day or two.

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In Archie's Girls Betty and Veronica #6, the characters were in a typical story situation — and Jughead was behaving in typical fashion.

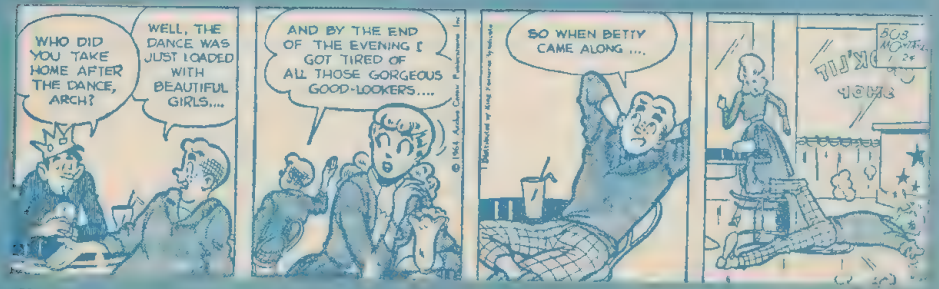
For the record, Veronica first showed up in *Pep Comics* #26. (Weirdly, she was re-introduced in *Archie* #1.) Reggie first showed up as various incarnations of tormenting and tattletaling classmates but was given a name and distinct personality for the first time in *Jackpot Comics* #5. With their arrival, the *Archie* cast was complete.

Various parents, teachers, Chok'lit Shop owners, etc. appeared in short order, but the series is *about* Archie, Jughead, Betty, Veronica, and Reggie.

For those who have never read an *Archie* comic, a brief explanation of the *Archie* formula would go something like this:

Archie Andrews, America's Typical Teenager, lives in Riverdale, U.S.A., with his father (Fred), his mother, Mary and (sometimes) his dog, Spotty. Archie is perennially a junior at Riverdale High School, where he is the nemesis of Principal Weatherbee, and often disrupts the classes of various teachers, including Miss Grundy, Professor Flutesnoot, Coach Kleats and others. Archie drives a dilapidated old jalopy (Ol' Betsy), which is in constant need of repair and gas. Because he hates to work, Archie is always broke, which puts a crimp in his singleminded pursuit of the smokily beautiful Veronica Lodge, the only child of multi-millionaire Jayson P. Lodge, who has settled in Riverdale to provide his child with a "normal" atmosphere within which to grow up. Lodge hasn't reckoned with anything like Archie.

Entirely smitten by the fickle Veronica, Archie is oblivious to the affections of pretty, perky blonde Betty Cooper, who has loved him since childhood. Knowing that Betty is always in the wings, Veronica manages to keep Archie from straying, although he will occasionally become fed up with her greed, snobbery, and flightiness, and turn to the stable, loyal, and eagerly waiting Betty. Betty, in turn, is constantly scheming (in a nice way, of course) with



Reggie Mantle to break up Archie and Veronica — for Reggie is also smitten with Veronica. He is also Archie's chief rival in everything from dating to sports to practical-joking. Oddly enough, he and Archie are very close friends.

But Reggie is not Archie's *best* friend — that is Jughead Jones (*ne* Forsythe P. Jones), who is a confirmed woman-hater and considers Archie's pursuit of girls (Veronica in particular) to be illogical, a waste of time and money, and, quite possibly, ultimately lethal. Jughead's one passion is food; his favorite pastime is outwitting Archie and Reggie in business deals.

Whew.

Everything, of course, revolves around Archie; but the rest of the gang also react and interact with each other. For example, Betty and Veronica consider Jughead's misogyny to be a threat to *all* women, and with the help of various female friends they constantly plot to break through his reserve and get him nicely saddled down with a domineering girlfriend.

It is interesting to note that when Jughead does occasionally show interest in women — for the sake of one of his schemes or through temporary amnesia or "insanity" — invariably every female in town, including Betty and Veronica, falls head over heels in love with him.

Or take, for example, the sort of problems the guys have with Jughead. Reggie, especially, no matter how hard he tries or how carefully he plots, simply cannot come out on top in any dealings with Jughead. If he flips a coin calling, "Heads I win, tails you lose!" the coin will land neatly on its edge. If he buys from Jughead a gross of pens that are guaranteed to write under water, they will — but *only* under water. Archie is often partners with Reggie on the losing end of these propositions; he has yet to learn that even Juggie's great friendship for him will not interfere with Jughead's talent for besting Reggie.

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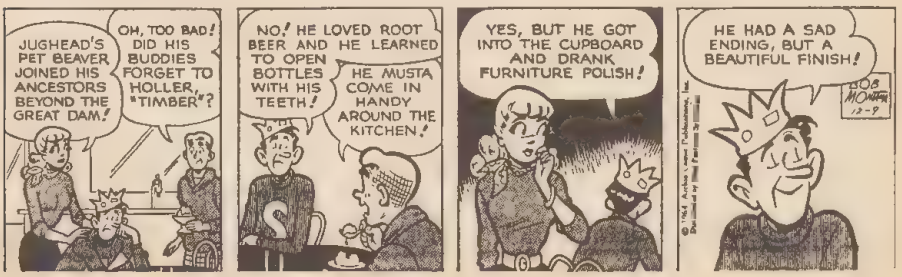
Artists who work on Archie stories today can use informational pictures designed to give them a consistent layout from story to story. These are two views of Archie's bedroom. Note the details.



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These are more information pictures for Archie artists — these pictures show Archie's school.

Jughead had his softer side, however. In one story, "My Favorite Fiend," he talked all of his friends out of buying raffle tickets for a color TV, then purchased them all himself at a hefty discount. The gang ostracized Juggie until they learned the TV went to the local orphanage.

Jughead often seemed to possess strange, otherworldly powers. It is well known that he can see without opening his eyes — indeed, once the rest of the gang, disgusted with this seeming display of laziness, forced him to open them. Of course, he was blinded by too much light, and staggered about dangerously.

His capacity for eating is also astounding, as are the lengths he will go to get food, especially hamburgers. Coach Kleats once discovered that all the eating Jughead did made him extremely fast and so put him on the football team. In the process of scoring the winning touchdown, Jug stopped in midfield to admire a hamburger advertisement, and Riverdale lost the game. The coach fared better in another story when he discovered that putting a hamburger behind the finish line caused Jughead to come in first in every race.

The number of stories featuring the eternal triangle of Archie/Betty/Veronica are too numerous to list, but worth special mention is the tale in which Archie made a date with both of them for the same night. Slipping away on flimsy pretexts, he shuttled between their houses, first in his car, then by bike, then roller skates, and finally by foot.

Another classic was the story in which Betty believed Archie and Veronica to be eloping, creating a scandal before the entire town and almost causing poor Mr. Lodge to commit murder. As if to even things out, Veronica once believed that Archie had given Betty an engagement ring — and it was she who almost committed homicide on the baffled Archie.

We were all secretly in love with Betty, as comics humorist Fred Hembeck noted — well, maybe not so secretly, because the people who created *Archie* comics sure knew about it. Many, many stories featured Betty or revolved around her.

In one, a doctor gave her a dose of tranquilizers so massive she virtually sleepwalked. A succession of friends each foisted her off on the next, but, wherever she ended up, it was close to Archie and Veronica, who wanted to be alone. Finally, frustrated beyond belief, Arch and Ron took a dose of the pills, and the story ends with all of them peacefully asleep.

Of course, Betty was instinctively drawn to Archie. He did not believe she had such a power. She called it her "Archie radar" and one day proved it to him by tracing him all across the city and finding him wherever he hid. The only problem was that Veronica had a "radar" which could tell when Archie was with Betty, so she would immediately show up to interfere.

Once, Betty appeared with a strange case of amnesia — she remembered everything *but* Archie. Fearing that his inattention had finally driven her insane, Archie stayed constantly at her side for days. Veronica just *knew* she was faking but couldn't prove it. In a nice touch, only the reader knew for sure, thanks to a surreptitious wink from Betty.

At one time, Betty actually got over her crush on Archie. She was tested by the whole gang, of course, but passed with flying colors. No one was more pleased than Archie, and he threw a party in honor of the event. Trouble began when a game of spin-the-bottle started, and Betty was sent into a dark room where Archie expected to find Veronica. Needless to say, the party was over in more ways than one.

Tales of rivalry between the girls and guys also abound; the best of these was "Good to the Last Drop," in which Archie and Jughead strove for weeks to determine how many cough drops were in a large glass jar in Pop Tate's window. Of course, it was the girls who ended up winning the contest. How? By multiplying Veronica's license plate number by the days in the year, dividing by Betty's hat size, adding the number of shoes in Ronnie's closet, and subtracting the price of sardines!

Typical teen pursuits formed the basis of many stories: Archie tried to master the twist; Archie tried to master surfing; Archie tried to master skating. Reggie, of course, could do all of these things superbly, but usually ended up caught in a tree (skiing), covered with poison ivy (hiking), trapped with an unlovely girl (acting), or lying in traction (mountain climbing, many others).

Like Charlie Brown, Archie had his trouble with kites, baseball (his team has lost to the girls on many occasions; another time he was forced to umpire a game between Betty's team and Veronica's team), and red-headed girls. In one particularly hilarious story, "The Untouchable," Arch had a dreadful sun-

burn and spendt the entire day flinching and screaming, "Don't touch the sunburn!" When Reggie pretended to slap him on the back, he fainted.

Only once was Archie able to master a "sport" that Reggie could not: It involved a strange contraption which strapped to the head; attached to it was a long elastic band and large, balloon-like rubber ball. The object was to play paddleball with one's forehead. Archie, the master of this dubious pastime, gained much satisfaction from it, until Reg got the bright idea of filling the ball with cement!

The greatest comeuppance which Reggie ever received was, as always, his own fault. Claiming that "the power of suggestion" would force Veronica to break her date with Archie and go with him, Reggie spent an entire day repeating, "Veronica will go to the dance with me." Such dedication to science must be rewarded, she decided, and broke her date with Archie. Burning, Archie decided to get even.

That night, he called Reggie and challenged him to work his power of suggestion upon Midge. As Reggie cockily repeated, "I am going to date Midge," into the phone, Archie handed the receiver to Midge's jealous boyfriend, Big Moose. Reggie's receiver literally exploded in his hand, and, in the last panel of the story, we saw Reggie, suitcase in hand, running past the city limits sign, saying, "I'm going to make 20 miles today, I'm going to make 20 miles today, I'm. . ."

Fantasy has always played a large part in *Archie* stories. Sometimes it was just a dream, such as the one Betty charmingly related to the reader in "The Other Side," wherein she and Veronica swapped sexes and lives with Archie and Reggie. (Who could ever forget "Archiegail"?)

In "Medical Madness," Archie concocted a "Jekyll" serum which transformed him into Reggie! He had a great time doing rotten things for which Reg, for once, got the blame.

In "Mirror, Mirror," the girls purchased an old funhouse distorting mirror which caused one to assume the shape reflected in it. It made Betty and Veronica hideous but transformed Mr. Weatherbee and Miss Grundy into young, beautiful, very sexy people — who were disturbed when Ronnie smashed the mirror, breaking the spell.

Although the characters often spoke directly to the reader and even (less frequently) referred to their existence as comic-book characters, entire stories were sometimes built around that fact. The best of these was "The Line," in which the gang discovered and followed a mysterious black line throughout the story only to discover it eventually spelled "The End."

Verbal misunderstandings served as the basis for many stories. In "Ignorance Is Bliss," Archie thought he'd discovered that Ronnie was going to give him a new bow tie for his birthday and frantically tried not to say "bow tie" in her presence.

In "The Perfect Student," Betty's daydreaming about Archie caused her to incorrectly hear and repeat everything said to her, causing fights, misunderstandings, and general chaos throughout the school.

In "Love and Gloom," Mom Andrews was worried when she overheard Arch and Jug calling each other derogatory slang names; Archie's Dad explained to her that it was just rough affection. So when a gang of guys was looking for Archie — "that rat, that skunk, that bum!" — to beat him up, his Mom helpfully told "his friends" where he was.

The abovementioned stories are typical of *Archie* stories from 1955 to 1965.

Archie Series

Archie/Archie Comics
Archie and Me
Archie . . . Archie Andrews, Where Are You?
Archie as Pureheart the Powerful/Archie as Captain Pureheart
Archie at Riverdale High
Archie Comics Digest
Archie Giant Series Magazine
Archie's Double Digest Quarterly Magazine
Archie's Girls, Betty and Veronica
Archie's Joke Book Magazine
Archie's Madhouse
Archie's Mechanics
Archie's Pal, Jughead/Jughead
Archie's Pals 'n' Gals
Archie's Rival Reggie/Reggie/Reggie and Me
Archie's Super-Hero Special Digest/Comics Digest Magazine
Archie's TV Laugh-out
Betty and Me
Betty & Veronica Annual Digest
Everything's Archie
Jackpot Comics
Jughead as Captain Hero
Jughead Jones Comics Digest
Jughead's Fantasy
Jughead's Jokes
Jughead with Archie Digest/Jughead with Archie Digest Plus Betty & Veronica & Reggie Too
Laugh Comics
Laugh Comics Digest
Life with Archie
Little Archie/The Adventures of Little Archie
Little Archie Comics Digest Annual
Little Archie Mystery
Pep Comics
Reggie's Wise Guy Jokes
Sabrina, the Teen-Age Witch

While the earliest appearances of the characters and titles can bring high prices (possibly more than $1000, in the case of ***Archie Comics*** *#1), fans new to Archie's comic-book career can find most of the comics discussed here at prices of $1 or less. "Good" condition copies of most of the Archie line of the last two and a half decades can be bought for prices no higher than comics you'll find on today's newsstands — making them attractive to new collectors as well as to those who read the line in the '60s. In fact, of the* ***Archie Comics*** *issues, only the first two dozen cost more than $10 each in "Good" condition.*

What makes them so enjoyable and funny is the simplicity with which they were written. The plot was simple yet came full circle to a satisfying conclusion. Characterization was paramount. Indeed, the funniest *Archie* stories from this period were character studies.

In this day of endless super-hero fist-fighting and soap-opera subplots, it is refreshing to see a story in which the main characters and themes are used to total advantage without the *sturm und drang* of "apparent change." Many writers currently working for Marvel and DC could stand a refresher course in straightforward writing and could easily get it by reading a few old *Archie* comics.

Others, in the past, did exactly that. So successful was the *Archie* format that it quickly spawned dozens of imitations (a number within the MLJ line itself). Titles which sounded vaguely like "Archie" — *Binky, Margie, Algie, Rusty, Nellie, Wendy, Aggie, Mitzi, Ginger, Patsy, Suzy*, and so on — soon began flooding the newsstands. These titles were not necessarily bad, but most of them simply did not have the life, warmth and humor that made the *Archie* line so successful.

Even those produced by MLJ/Archie, although they looked exactly like *Archie* comics and read much the same, and were certainly produced by many of the same people, could not compare with the original. Those of us who were faithful *Archie* readers back in the '50s used to despise the in-house *Archie* imitations much more than we did those from other companies; we couldn't understand why the artists and writers "wasted" their time doing *Josie* and *Sabrina* when they could have been doing an *Archie* story.

The most blatant, yet somehow the most loving, instance of such imitation did not appear in a comic book; it was on television.

The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis, one of the most fondly remembered shows of the late '50s-early '60s (do those dates sound familiar?) copied the *Archie* formula so closely that one must wonder why John Goldwater and his associates did not file an action.

Max Shulman's original stories, upon which the series was based, concerned themselves with the trials and tribulations of a college student in the '40s. While extremely funny and popular (MGM based a 1953 movie, *The Affairs of Dobie Gillis*, starring Debbie Reynolds and Bobby Van, upon them), the TV show resembled them only slightly.

Wisely, the producers of the show decided to stick with the tried and true *Archie* format, and so the series presented girl-chasing Dobie Gillis (Archie), iconoclastic, woman-hating Maynard G. Krebs (Jughead), flighty, fickle, money-grubbing Thalia Menninger (Veronica), loyal, loving Zelda Gilroy (Betty), rotten, scheming Chatsworth Osborne Jr. (Reggie), the harried father, Herbert T. Gillis (Fred Andrews), and the rich parent, Mrs. Osborne (Mr. Lodge), accompanied by assorted teachers, friends, mothers, etc.

As it had for years in comic books, the formula worked wonderfully on TV — *Dobie Gillis* remained on the air for four years and ended only when star Dwayne Hickman decided to go on to other roles. Although the format of *Dobie Gillis* changed several times, the essentials which it had borrowed from the *Archie* format never really varied. One can only smile at the thought of millions of adults each week watching and hugely enjoying the same situations and antics on *Dobie Gillis* that their children were reading in an *Archie* comic.

If we were a little old to be reading the comics, weren't *they* a little old to be watching an imitation of same?

Unfortunately, the *Archie* format never worked for Archie and his friends, at least not on television. They were luckier with radio.

The *Archie* radio show premiered in 1943. It was very successful and lasted for about 10 years, first daily, later weekly on Saturday mornings. Among those who played Archie on the airwaves was Bob Hastings, later to become more famous as the bumbling Lt. Elroy Carpenter on *McHale's Navy*. Although the radio series was entertaining, the stories focused a little too closely on Archie's home life. One could understand such a mistake being made on television, where cost and expediency could limit the scope of the show, but not on radio, where only the listener's imagination set the boundaries.

Most of the shows featured the travails faced by Archie's dad as he tried to cope with his son and his "crazy friends," especially Jughead.

Among memorable things about the show were the Swift's Premium Sausage advertisements (featuring the sound of sizzling sausage which made your mouth water) and the broken-voiced call of Jughead that opened the show (why did kids living in middle-America Riverdale have Brooklyn accents?). But who, once having heard it, can ever forget how Archie could only utter a goofy, tongue-tied laugh whenever Veronica would say, "Archiekins . . ." in her soft, Southern accent?

The first pilot for an *Archie* television show was made in 1963 for the ABC network. The cast included John Simpson as Archie, Cheryl Holdridge as Betty (she was Cheryl from the *Mickey Mouse Club*), Miki Jamison as Veronica, Wayne Adams as Reggie, Jerry Brite as Jughead, and former screen *Charlie Chan* Roland Winters as Mr. Weatherbee. Also appearing were William Schallert and Jean Vanderpyl as Archie's parents and Mary Grace Canfield as Miss Grundy. It was directed by Gene Nelson and written by Ray Allen. The producer was Harry Ackerman, who also created *Bewitched* about this same time.

The story was enjoyable enough but typical of early '60s TV fare: Archie came up with a scheme to use Veronica's dad's new "electrical computer" to match up couples for the school dance. All went well until Ronnie learned that Arch promised to take Betty to the hop.

Naturally, she nixed his use of the computer. Archie, who had earlier in the show been established as a Rube Goldberg-ish inventor, created a mock computer complete with flashing lights, etc. to substitute. This "computer" was made of plywood and operated by Jughead, who was concealed inside. The expected complications ensued, with the upshot being that Archie alone was left without a date for the dance.

As is usual with TV shows about teens, all of the lead actors (excepting Cheryl) seemed to be several years too old. John Simpson performed passably as Archie, as did Cheryl Holdridge and Miki Jamison. Wayne Adams' Reggie struck just the right note of arrogance, and the show would have greatly benefited from more of him. Roland Winters' Weatherbee was pretty funny, if not completely in keeping with the comics character.

The single biggest flaw with this show was the portrayal of Jughead. Not only was his character completely altered — he wanted nothing more than to date a girl named Muffy — buy why anyone would have chosen Jerry Brite to play Jughead is almost incomprehensible. Brite was short, pot-bellied, and bowlegged and wore a crewcut. He was also far and away the worst actor of the lot. So bad was the character and his performance that it literally ruined the episode.

Included with the pilot episode was a short tag designed to be seen by potential advertisers. Remaining largely in character, the actors enthused over planned upcoming episodes (several of which sounded much funnier than the one just seen). Winters also announced that the *Archie* comic strip was currently running in 331 papers and that the *Archie* comic books had a guaranteed annual circulation of 24 *million* readers per year, guaranteeing that "The *Archie* TV show will have a built-in audience of over 20 million teen-age boys and girls."

One can only wonder why the pilot did not make it to series. The show was no better but worse than most shows at that time, and the tie-in with *Archie* readers should have attracted some serious advertiser interest.

Perhaps the prospect of having Jerry Brite's Jughead associated with their products week after week frightened them all away.

Archie and his gang next appeared on TV in 1969 as Saturday-morning animated characters on *The Archie Show*. The success of this original series from Filmation and its subsequent reworkings (*The U.S. of Archie, The Bang-Shang-Alang Show, Archie's TV Funnies*, etc.) gave the comic books a much-needed shot in the arm and introduced Archie to an entirely new generation of fans. Fittingly, Bob Hastings once again supplied the voice of Archie.

The animated medium is uniquely suited to *Archie*, so it is unfortunate that Filmation, with its policy of using limited animation and its almost unbearably bad scripting, was chosen to create the program.

The only successful element of the series was the inclusion of music, as performed by the rock band "The Archies". The tunes, produced outside the studio by Don Kershner, were bouncy and upbeat. Several of them ultimately became top-40 hits, including "Sugar, Sugar" and "Bang-Shang-Alang".

Naturally, this element of the series was quickly overdone, and, as the show went through its various incarnations, the quality of the music dropped drastically. Worse still, "The Archies" and Jughead's obnoxious TV pooch, Hot Dog, were incorporated into the comic-book continuity, a blow from which the strip has yet to fully recover.

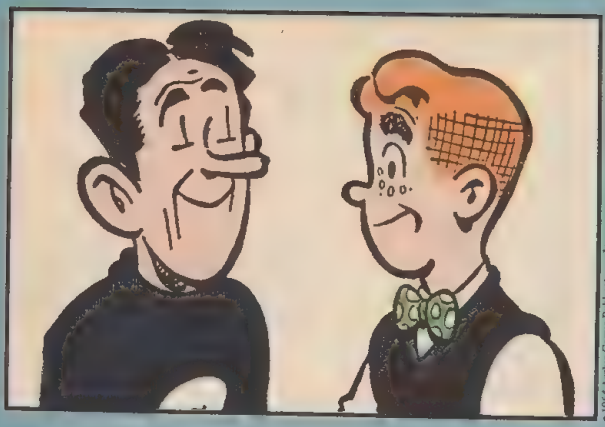
The only really good thing about the various Saturday-morning series was the fact that they often faithfully adapted stories from the comics. These were easily recognizable, as they were far suprior to Filmation's original scripts.

© 1968 Archie Comic Publications, Inc.

The Archies had been appearing in the comic book for some time (with many gags about how terrible they were). Then the cartoon series began, and the comic-book stories took a new approach. In Archie *#189 (March 1969), Veronica's father reluctantly got them an audition with Don Kirshner — with the results shown above.*

James Komack must have realized this when he planned his adaptation of Archie in 1977. Once again, live actors filled the roles in a videotaped pilot, again for ABC. Featured as Archie was Dennis Bowen; Audrey Landers (*Dallas*) played Betty; Hilary Thompson was Veronica; Derrel Maury was Jughead; Susan Blu and Jim Boelsen played Midge and Big Moose; and Gordon Jump (*WKRP in Cincinnati*) was Archie's dad. Especially fine was Mark Winkworth as a dapper, appropriately slick-haired Reggie.

Much of the pilot seemed to have been shot at an actual high school, and a number of elaborate sets were built (Archie's house, Veronica's house, etc.) and used to good advantage. All of the skits, of varying length, were taken almost directly from stories which had been published in the early '60s: Archie



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must choose between Ronnie and Betty to play Juliet to Reggie's Romeo — he finally chooses Midge; the boys decide to crash Veronica's pajama party and are caught by Mr. Lodge; Archie and Reggie try to find out Jughead's real name (adapted virtually word-for-word from one of the all-time best two-pagers); the guys stage an all-night study session to help star athlete Big Moose cram for a final — he passes, they all fail because they fell asleep; and so on.

The major flaw with this pilot was the inclusion of several numbers by a particularly forgettable rock band. An unusual touch was added by having live actors converse with animated characters in *Joke Book* gags before and after each commercial break. Had the art on these been better, they would have been effective.

Although the pilot made a poor showing in the ratings, ABC apparently felt it showed promise and gave Komack permission to try again about a year later. The second pilot featured the same cast and much the same format. This time, however, Archie and the gang performed the musical numbers themselves and did a surprisingly fine job. One song performed by Betty (Audrey Landers), "Archie, I Love You So," was quite nice. Another, "Do We Have a Date Tonight?" was almost a self-contained story (each of the characters broke a date with another when a better offer came along). As in so many stories, the instigator of the mess, Veronica, was justly left sitting alone on a Saturday night.

Marring this second pilot were an awkward framing sequence featuring Archie and his dad and the overly long hair of Derrel Murphy. The worst aspect, however, was that once again Jughead's character was completely misunderstood; he constantly referred to his "shyness with girls" and his desire to have a girlfriend. It seems as though Jughead's character, which has remained remarkably consistent throughout the years, is incomprehensible to script-writers. Rather than intelligent, he becomes a fool; rather than an instigator of schemes, he becomes a dupe; and rather than an interesting misogynist, he becomes a whining wimp. Jughead is only interesting when he retains his unique qualities; when he becomes like every other second-banana, he ceases to be interesting *or* funny.

Overall, however, both of the Komack shows were successful. The performances were fine and the skits funny. One can only feel that, if Komack had chosen to shoot the pilots as half-hour programs and eliminated the music entirely, they would have had a good chance of making ABC's schedule. The combination of music interspersed with comedy may have harkened too much to the variety format which had been in decline for some years.

With the success of *Annie* on Broadway, a number of projects were announced for upcoming film, stage, or TV musical adaptations. Among them was *Archie*, slated at different times as a movie, then a Broadway show, then again a movie. The poor showing of *Popeye* and the *Annie* movie ended most of the speculation, and as of this writing, no *Archie* projects have been finalized.

Throughout this same period, *Archie* comics were undergoing changes and rough times of their own. The arrival of the mid-'60s seemed to signal an end to an era; Marvel comics were taking off to new heights; DC was changing, dropping many of its older, non-super-hero titles; long-established companies like ACG and Harvey were beginning to fail. Comics readers were changing as well, and there were fewer of them.

The creators of the *Archie* line seemed lost. In a very short period — the change can be seen almost month by month in late 1965 and early 1966 — the quality of *Archie* titles declined alarmingly. Art became sloppy, stories stale and unfunny. Also, the *Archie* group experimented with a super-hero line, collectively known as "The Mighty Heroes," seemingly relegating *Archie* stories to second place.

A lack of editorial direction for the line resulted in some strange incarnations for Archie and his gang. During the *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* rage, the gang became agents of *P.O.P.*, battling *C.R.U.S.H.*. Later, Archie, Jughead, and Betty each got a chance at superheroing as, respectively, *Pureheart the Powerful, Captain Hero*, and *Superteen*. (Reggie became, naturally, *Evilheart*.)

Following quickly was the arrival of *The Archies*, thanks to the popular TV series. Also harming the series during these years was a foredoomed attempt to have the appearance and attitudes of Archie and his pals change in keeping with current trends.

The turmoil of the '60s and early '70s was perhaps nowhere better reflected than in the pages of Archie comics. The traditional values which Archie comics had always upheld were beginning to crumble, and even small children no longer believed in many of them. If nothing else, they knew that teen-agers no longer acted like Archie and his friends did. Half-hearted efforts were made to keep the gang in tune with the times; these mostly proved embarrassing and highly detrimental to the overall quality of the scripts.

This was reflected most of all in Jughead and Reggie: Reggie's traditional slick hair had to go, and some of the substitutes made him look not-quite-human. Jughead fell victim to pseudo-hippie philosophy and costuming. You haven't lived until you've read the story in which Jug, in Nehru jacket and love beads, handed out flowers and talking about "pollen power."

Worst of all, it was now evident that *Archie* creators, so long and so effectively in touch with teenage life, had lost that trait. With that gone, the heart went

*In a story called "The Other Side," reprinted in **Betty and Veronica Annual Digest Magazine #3**, Reggie told Betty and Veronica, "I wish you could be boys for **one day**! You'd find out which is the harder!" That night, Betty dreamed she and Veronica — and Archie and Reggie — had changed roles. Betty became "Buddy," and Veronica became "Roddy." The story ended with Betty saying, "It's nice to know what the other side of the fence is **really** like! Now I'm **glad** I'm a girl!"*

© 1982 Close-Up, Inc

out of the series. For the first time, *Archie* comics were no longer a reflection of teen and pre-teen life. And they were no longer funny.

This period of imitativeness and slipshod story-telling lasted until the early '70s, when the entire line once again returned to a semblance of its former self. Unfortunately, too much time had passed. Current stories, while often amusing, lack the zaniness which made those of years ago so memorable. Also, the art sometimes seems rushed and unfinished; backgrounds are sparse, stock poses and facial expressions are used over and over, and the coloring is unimaginative.

Even so, the *Archie* line is still healthy. There are more titles featuring Archie and his gang now than at any time since the '60s, and they are the only comics which receive consistent distribution to convenience stores, drug stores, and the like. Distributors know that the *Archie* line is easily recognized by parents and can be trusted to sell to them. We can also be grateful for the ongoing line of *Archie Digests*, which reprint stories from the early '50s to the present at a bargain price of about $1 for 120-odd pages.

At the heart of the continuing success of *Archie* is the simple, yet endlessly intriguing, formula worked out so long ago by John Goldwater, Sr., Harry Shorten, and Bob Montana. Had the *Archie* series, like so many of its imitators, concentrated solely on the Archie/Betty/Veronica triangle, it would have very soon become stale and repetitive and would, likely as not, have vanished before the end of the '40s.

Fortunately, Archie (like the "typical teenager" we callow adolescents wanted so badly to become) leads a full and varied life. Every facet of the teenage experience — sports, part-time jobs, school, battles with parents, cars, recreation, peer pressure, and so on — can and does serve as a springboard for an *Archie* story. Over the years, it is highly likely that *every* activity in which a teenager can legally and morally participate has been used in an *Archie* story. (Many activities which *are* illegal and/or immoral have been investigated, as well, but always in a spirit of condemnation.)

Such diversity is the secret of *Archie*; it is why the series has been, and probably always will be, successful. Archie and his gang are always doing something. Their lives are rich with love and friendship, forever full of youthful fun and exuberance.

To a child at an age when it takes an immense amount of willpower simply to sit still throughout a class period, the frenetic activity of Archie and his friends must seem like heaven on earth. Even the most popular and outgoing of adolescents have stretches of inactivity and boredom, but not Archie — he's always got something to do and someone to do it with. Archie has fun, and we have fun reading about him.

PRICE GUIDE

Comics Collector's price guide is designed to provide information on the most current values in the comics world. **It is fully revamped and updated every three months, so you always have the most current information on what your collection is worth.** It is designed to be a price guide **and** an easy-to-use index of all current comics. The abbreviations below will help you find the leading artists, heroes, villains, and events in each issue. This format is designed to help both the newcomer and the experienced collector.

Beginning with major DC and Marvel titles from the mid-'50s, we offer information on title runs to date. The super-hero is the main focus within the hobby, and it is the main focus of this list. Current trends have been carefully studied and are revealed in our list's prices.

These prices reflect current selling trends. Many collectors don't realize that, in some regions and at some times of the year, certain issues will be higher or lower than seems standard in other locations at other times. For instance, a certain artist sometimes attends a convention, where his work will be highly sought after; this, in turn, may cause the price on his art to rise in that region. Economic conditions can also have a strong influence on prices. Areas with high unemployment will find prices dropping, while prices in other areas are rising. With worse economic conditions, high-priced items and middle-value comics tend to drop in value or have their prices debated. (The pristine older comic is usually an exception to this.)

A new phenomenon has arisen in comics — the plethora of exciting new issues. Demand has been so great in some cases that new issues have risen in value almost immediately. Dealers' supplies diminish quickly, and values then begin to climb sharply, with dealers unable to restock a hot issue easily. **This price guide has been updated to reflect trends occurring in the last three months.**

No single source can provide a universally acceptable value guide to comics. Dealers' price lists were an information source for this new compilation, as were advertised "buy and sell" ads, auction results, and surveys of comics conventions. Special mention must be given to **The Comic Book Price Guide**, by Robert M. Overstreet. This work, now in its 15th year, has been a primary source of comics information and is a must for every collector.

Special thanks to Comics, Comix, Toys and Games in San Francisco, Calif.; Collector City, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Friendly Frank's Comics, New York, N.Y.; Yesteryear's Collectibles, Ridgefield, Conn., and Crash at Capital City for the information they freely provided for our price poll.

The prices stated are for near-mint comics. This is the most acceptable and general condition a collector desires for newer comics. A near mint copy is almost perfect — with almost no signs of wear or aging. There might be one or two tiny defects discernable only on close examination (for example, an extremely slight flaking on the spine). **The condition of comics is a vital factor in determining comics values.**

The prices for Silver Age (that is, post-1956) DC and Marvel comics are on the rise again. **Action**, **Adventure**, **Brave and Bold**, and **Detective** comics have shown healthy price increases on the Silver Age issues. Early issues of **Justice League of America** and **Showcase** also show significant gains.

While sales of new comics are reported as brisk, certain titles which some dealers thought would be "sleepers" did not show quick gains in value. However, DC's **Swamp Thing** is gaining in popularity and is, for that reason, rising in price. We have seen **Swamp Thing** #20, Alan Moore's first issue, being sold for as much as $20 — the first time an author's name alone has meant an increase in the value of an issue.

Many parts of the country are finding increasing values for **Alpha Flight**, **G.I. Joe**, **New Mutants**, and **X-Men**. Paul Smith's issues of **X-Men** are showing stronger prices — and, in fact, all **X-Men** "170's" are strong. Even the reprint **X-Men** numbers 67-93 are showing increasing interest (and increasing prices). Even the **X-Men** spin-offs can't miss.

The **G.I. Joe** series continues to skyrocket in price. The first 26 issues just fly off the shelves. Dealers don't seem to be able to keep even current issues on the shelves, one dealer saying they really are scarce. Another dealer told us **G.I. Joe** is bringing in an entirely new generation of comics collectors.

ARTISTS ABBREVIATIONS

NA	— Neal Adams
AA	— Alfredo Alcala
JA	— Jim Aparo
RA	— Ross Andru
TA	— Terry Austin
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A - Appearance of
C - Cameo of
(c) - cover
D - Death of
I - Introduction of
(i) - inks
J - Joining of
L - Leaving of
M or W - Wedding of
N - New costume
O - Origin of
(p) - pencils
R - Revival of
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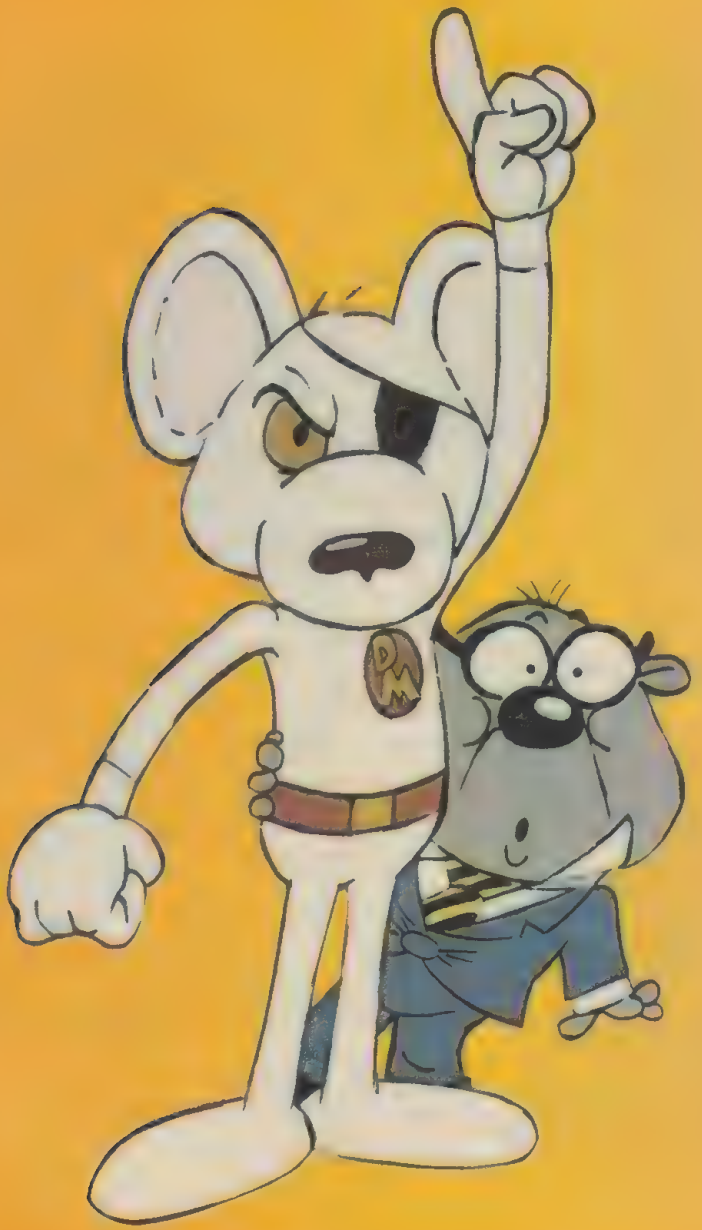
(Continued on Page 75)



BURIED TREASURE

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By Clayton Emery

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Want weirdness squared? Try the DC brand of X-Men. No, wait, they already have one.

How about a parody of The X-Men? That would be hard to do, wouldn't it? How about DC's answer to the Sons and Daughters of the Justice Society? Crazy T H.U.N.D E R. Agents? OK, OK, never mind. Are there any Woody Allen fans out there?

The Inferior Five was a humor comic (remember those?) from the mid-'60s that starred Merryman (a Woody Allen type as a jester), Awkwardman, White Feather, The Blimp, and Dumb Bunny (right, she was female). Children of "The Freedom Brigade" (The Patriot, Lady Liberty, Capt. Swift, The Bowman, Princess Power, Mr. Might, and The Mermaid, parody versions of other super-heroes), for a dozen issues or so they romped and stomped and spoofed every super-hero on the market, all without drawing blood.

In *Showcase* #65 (November-December 1966), they journeyed to Professor Egghead's Academy of Super-Heroes. Before long, they met (and tripped over) The Basilisk, The Ape, Winter Wonderlad, Icarus, and Levitation Lass. (Fans of *X-Men* of the '60s will quickly get the references to Professor Xavier and his students, Cyclops, The Beast, Iceman, The Angel, and Marvel Girl.)

We even got scientific explanations for their respective origins: "Icarus is very unusual, he's a throwback to the birds." "But people aren't descended from birds." "I know, that's what makes him so unusual." "Uhh, huhh. Tell me, Icarus, how do you get your shirt on over your wings?"

And so it went. I confess I don't understand who the villains were supposed to be, but no *X-Men* fan should be without a copy.

While you're there, pick up *The Inferior Five* #1. (You can pick up both issues for a total of less than $5.) In the first issue of their own title, our heroes ran into U.N.C.L.E. cognates Ceasar Single and Kwitcha Belliakin. "Poor Mr Belliakin is gun-shy, ever since someone shot off one of his ears." "But he has two ears!" "Now, yes."

The villains were from the group called H.U.R R.I.C.A.N.E (obviously derived from The T.H.U.N.D E.R. Agents). Powerhouse, Missing Fink (No-Man — love it!), Blackbird, Mr. Mental, and Yellow Streak. The cover was false, though, because The I5 did *not* take on the Campfire Girls.

Bridwell and Sekowsky were at their craziest. And what the heck, it's cheap!

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(Continued from Page 72)

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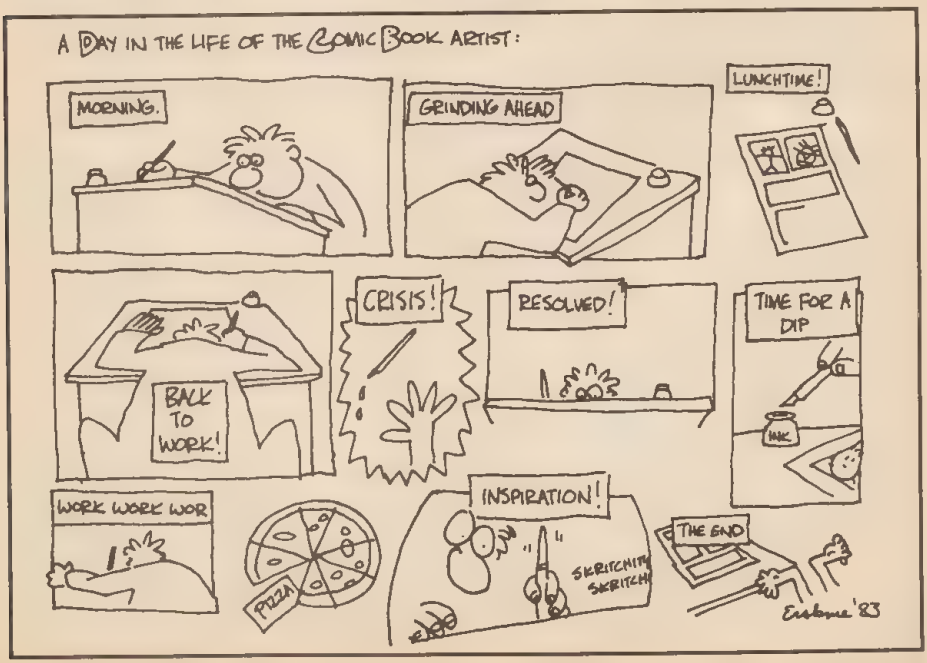

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CHICAGO, IL - July 5-7 - 10th Annual Chicago Comicon (C), Ramada O Hare Hotel, A n/a Chicago Comicon 1219 Devon Chicago Il 60660 PH 312-274-1832

DAYTON, OH - July 12-14 - PULPCON 14 (P), Univ of Dayton Rusty Hevelin Box 112 Dayton, OH 45401

BOWLING GREEN, KY - July 13 - Comic Book, Baseball Cards Coin & Stamp Show (C, Cd) Bowling Green Mall 2700 Nashville Rd A free James Mi les PO Box 224, Bowling Green, KY 42101 PH 502-842-5492

ROYAL OAK, MI - July 14 - Encore-Con Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), American Legion Hall 1815 Rochester Rd, 10am-5pm, A $1, F $20 Michael Lester 16232 Carriage Lamp Ct #929, Southfield, MI 48075

ROCKFORD, IL - July 14 - Classic Card N Comic Show (C), Quality Inn Airport 4419 11th St 251 S 10am-4pm A free, T 10 F $15 Gary Johnson, 605 Theodore St Loves Park IL 61111 PH 815-633 8495

DETROIT, MI - July 20-21 - Creation Show (C, DW, ST), Hyatt Regency Dearborn at the Fairlane Center, A n/a Creation, Box 7155 Garden City, NY 11530

ELK GROVE VILLAGE, IL - July 27 - Relative Dimensions Convention (DW SF), Elk Grove High School, 500 W Elk Grove Blvd A $9 adults, $5 under 12 Relative Dimensions, c/o Brad Newlan PO Box 2295, Des Plaines, IL 60017 PH 312-296 1480

LEXINGTON, KY - July 27-28 - LexCon (C, Cd, M, SF), Ramada Inn, Waller Ave, 11am-5pm A $1 F $35 The Comic Shoppe 947 Eastern Parkway, Louisville KY 40217 PH 502-637-1893

CLEVELAND, OH - Aug 3-4 - Saturday's Child Nostalgia Festival #21 (C Cd M, SF), Richmond Mall, Richmond Rd & Wilson Mills Rd Sat 10am-9pm, Sun Noon-5pm A free, T 90 Joe Fruranch 2520 Ashurst Cleveland OH 44118 PH 216-932-2596 1480

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CLEVELAND, OH - Aug 18 - Show (C Cd), Holiday Inn, Route 21 E, Tinpk Exit 11 10am-6pm A $1 50 Cards, Etc 163 Greenway, Elyria OH 44035

HILLSIDE, IL - Aug 18-19 - Baseball Card Show (C Cd) Holiday Inn, I-290 Eisenhower X-way between Wolf & Mannheim Rds 10am-3pm A $1, Graham Crackers Comics 5 E Chicago Ave Naperville, IL 60540 PH 312-355-7400 or 932-1549

MILWAUKEE, WI - Aug 22-25 - GENCon (C, G) MECCA Convention Center 500 W Kilbourn Ave A n/a TSR, Inc PO Box 756 Lake Geneva, WI 53147 PH 414-248 3625

NILES, OH - Aug 23-25 Comic & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), Eastwood Mall, A free, F $50, A-Lot-A Sports Cards, 8065 E Market St, Warren OH 44484 PH 216 856 7307

MERRILLVILLE, IN - Aug 25 Yesteryears Collectors Show Holiday Star Resort Hotel, I-65 & US 30 10am-4pm, A $1, under 12 50¢, T 50 F $25 Ken Zajkowski, 1135 E Sibley, Dolton, IL 60419 PH 312-849 0688 or PH 312-849-1521

TOLEDO, OH - Aug 25 Comic Book Show (C), Holiday Inn-outhwyck, Reynolds Rd A $1 25 F $30 TE Kesser Prods 140 W 69th St, Suite 115C New York NY 10023 PH 212 787 4003

FARMINGTON HILLS, MI - Aug 25 - X-Trava-Con (C, Cd), American Legion Hall, 29500 W 9 Mile Rd, 10am-4pm A, $1, F $20 Michael Lester, 16232 Carriage Lamp Ct, #929, Southfield MI 48075 PH 313-557-3235

MIDDLE ATLANTIC

STATES IN REGION: Del Md, N C, S C, Va W Va and Wash D C

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA - July 6 - Comic Book, Baseball Card & Record Show (C Cd R) Pembroke Mall, Independence & VA Beach Blvds, 10am-9 30pm A free, F $25 Larry Webster 1209 Winston St, Norfolk VA 23518 PH 804 587 7160

WASHINGTON, DC - July 6 7 Creation Show (C ST DW), Marriott Twin Bridges Hotel 333 Jefferson Davis Hwy in Arlington VA A n/a Creation Box 7155 Garden City NY 11530

GREENVILLE, SC - July 13 - Carolina Con IV (C, F, SF), Sheraton Palmetto Inn, 4295 Augusta Rd, at I-85 10am-4 30pm A $1 Tim Littlejohn, Jr., Rt 7, Patrol Club Rd Greenville SC 29609 PH 803 246-9674

SILVER SPRING, MD - July 13 - Jubilee Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C, SF), Armory Place, 925 Wayne Ave, 11am-5pm A $4 T 25, F $38 Jubilee Enter 11910 Asbury Dr, Ft Washington MD 20744 PH 301 292 4587

ROANOKE, VA - July 21 - Jubilee Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C SF), Hotel Roanoke, 19 N Jefferson St, 11am-4pm A $3 50, T 25, F $35 Jubilee Enter 11910 Asbury Dr, Ft Washington MD 20744 PH 301 292 4587

RICHMOND, VA - July 27 - Jubilee Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C, SF), Holiday Inn, 6531 W Broad St, 11am-5pm A $3, T 25, F $38 Jubilee Enter 11910 Asbury Dr Ft Washington, MD 20744 PH 301 292 4587

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA - July 28 - Jubilee Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C SF) Pavilion Convention Center, 1000 19th St, 11am-4pm, A $3, T 25 F $35 Jubilee Enter 11910 Asbury Dr Ft Washington MD 20744 PH 301 292 4587

RICHMOND, VA - July 28 Mid-Atlantic Convention (C, ST DW) Imperial 400 Hotel, 5215 W Broad St, 10am-4pm, A $1 50, T 25, F $20 Steve Potter Rt 10 Box 375 Mechanicsville VA 23111 PH 804-355-8023

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA - Aug 10-11 - All Star Baseball Card & Comic Book Show (C, Cd) Pavilion Center, Hwy VA, Rt 44 Sat 11am-6pm Sun 10am-5pm, A $1, under 8 free, T 100, F $60 Joe Morano, PO Box 12694 Norfolk, VA 23502 PH 804-486-7191 after 7pm

ARLINGTON, VA - Aug 17 - Jubilee Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C SF) Holiday Inn 1489 Jeff Davis Hwy, 11am-5pm, A $4, T 25 F $40 Jubilee Enter 11910 Asbury Dr, Ft Washington, MD 20744 PH 301 292 4587

SPARTANBURG, SC - Aug 24 - Sparta Con (C), Holiday Inn, I 26 & I 85, A $1 D W Howard Super Giant Books 38 Wal St, Asheville NC 28801 PH 704-254-2103

DURHAM, NC - Aug 25 - Mid-Atlantic Convention #1 (C ST), Imperial 400 Motor Inn 10am-6pm, A $1 50 T 20, F $20 Steve Potter, Rt 10 Box 375, Mechanicsville VA 23111 PH 804-355-8023

MOUNTAIN

STATES IN REGION Ariz Colo Idaho, Mont Nev, N M Utah and Wyo

NEW ENGLAND

STATES IN REGION: Conn Maine, Mass N H, R I and Vt

WARWICK, RI - July 18-21 Collectable Show (C, Cd) Mallard Inn off Rte 95 & 29N, A free Fiorenna Marino, 75 Knowley Way Narragansett RI 02882

WEST HAVEN, CT - July 21 Comic Books Baseball Card & Collectables Show (C Cd) Knights of Columbus Hall 263 Center St 10am-4pm A $2, T 40 Harold Finer, 83 April St West Haven CT 06516 PH 203 933-3489

MARLBOROUGH, MA - Aug 4 Nostalgia Show (C), Holiday Inn Exit 24A off Rt 495, 9am-3pm, A $1, T 70, F $20 Bill Hevin H&H Promotions, PO Box 34, Marlborough MA 01752 PH 617 485-6500

EAST HARTFORD, CT - Aug 18 ConnectiCon (C), Elks Hall 148 Roberts St 11am-5pm, A 99¢ F $20 Harold Kinney, RFD 1 Box 218A Andover CT 06232 PH 203 289-1208

NORTHEAST

STATES IN REGION: N J, N Y and Pa

BAYSIDE, NY - July 6 - Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd) Adria II Conference Center 221-17 Northern Blvd, 10am-5pm A free Steve Sabow 217-15 47th Rd, Bayside NY 11361 PH 212-631-2025 or Mitch Nat 200-34 45th Dr Bayside NY 11361 PH 212 224 9699

ERIE, PA - July 7 - Jubilee Comic Book & Science Fiction Con (C SF), Hilton, 16 W 10th St 10am-4pm A $3, T 25 F $38 Jubilee Enter, 11910 Asbury Dr., Ft Washington MD 20744 PH 301 292 4587

EAST MEADOW, NY - July 7 Long Island Monthly Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C Cd), Coliseum Motor Inn, 1650 Hempstead Turnpike, 10am-5pm, A free Starwind Comics PH 516-579-7656

PITTSBURGH, PA - July 13 - Transfer Monthly Show (C, SF, M) Howard Johnsons Motor Lodge, 3401 Blvd of the Allies Dealers Room 10am-5pm Films 7pm-10pm, A $2 50, F $30 BEM, PO Box 8619, Pittsburgh, PA 15221 PH 412-243-2736

HAZLET, NJ - July 14 - Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C Cd) Sheraton Inn, Route 35 So, Garden State Pkwy Exit 117, 9 30am-4pm A $1 50, F $30 Mike Grecco PO Box 189 Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716 PH 201-291-1632

PITTSBURGH, PA - July 14 - Antique & Collectable Fair (C, Cd) Castle Shannon Memorial Firehall, Rt 88, 8am-6pm, A free Collectors Cabinet, 701 Washington Rd, Pittsburgh PA 15228 PH 412 561 1885

NEW YORK CITY, NY - July 21 Show (C, Cd, M SF, R) The Roosevelt Madison Ave at 45th St A $1 Sea Gate Distributors, 657 Fifth Ave Brooklyn, NY 11215 PH 718 788 1126

STATEN ISLAND, NY - July 21 Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), K of C Columbian Syceum, 386 Clove Rd 9 30am-4pm A $1 50, F $40 Mike Grecco, PO Box 189 Atlantic Highlands, NJ 07716 PH 201 291-1632

NEW YORK, NY - July 27-28 - Creation Show (C, DW, ST), Roosevelt Hotel 45th & Madison Ave in Manhattan, A n/a Creation, Box 7155 Garden City, NY 11530

EAST MEADOW, NY - Aug 4 - Long Island Monthly Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), Coliseum Motor Inn, 1650 Hempstead Turnpike, 10am-5pm A free Starwind Comics PH 516 579 7656

BAYSIDE, QUEENS, NY - Aug 10 Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), Adria II Conference Center 221-17 Northern Blvd 10am-5pm, A free Steve Sabow, 217-15 47th Rd Bayside, NY 11361 PH 212-631-2025 or Mitch Nat, 200-34 45th Dr Bayside, NY 11361 PH 212-224-9699

PITTSBURGH, PA - Aug 10 - Transfer Monthly Show (C, SF, M) Howard Johnsons Motor Lodge, 3401 Blvd of the Allies Dealers Room 10am-5pm Films 7pm-10pm, A $2 50, F $30 BEM, PO Box 8619, Pittsburgh, PA 15221 PH 412-243-2736

HICKSVILLE, NY - Aug 10-11 Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), Mid-Island Mall, Rtes 106-107 Sat 10am-10pm, Sun Noon-5pm, A free, T 20 F $65 Marty Perry PO Box 582 Jericho, NY 11753 PH 516 822 4260

NEW YORK CITY, NY - Aug 11 Show (C, Cd, M, SF, R) The Roosevelt Madison Ave at 45th St, A $1 Sea Gate Distributors 657 Fifth Ave, Brooklyn NY 11215 PH 718 788 1126

PITTSBURGH, PA - Aug 11 Antique & Collectable Fair (C Cd), Castle Shannon Memorial Firehall, Rt 88 8am-4pm A free Collectors Cabinet, 701 Washington Rd, Pittsburgh, PA 15228 PH 412 561 1885

SEASIDE HEIGHTS, NJ - Aug 17 Show (C Cd SF), American Legion Post #351, Carteret Ave & Bay Blvd, 10am-4 30pm, A 50¢, F $25 Ruth S Campbell 827 Prospect Ave Pine Beach NJ 08741 PH 201 244 2923

MT. LAUREL, NJ - Aug 24 25 Comics, Baseball Cards, Stamps & Coins (C), Hilton Rt 73 & 295, Sat 10am-6pm Sun 10am-5pm, A n/a Terndee 15 Whitman Sq. Turnersville, NJ 08012 PH 609 228 8645

TOMS RIVER, NJ - Aug 25 Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C Cd), Elks Post #1875 Clifton & Washington Ave G S Pkwy Exit 82, 9 30am-4pm, A $1 F $30 Mike Grecco, PO Box 189 Atlantic Highlands NJ 07716 PH 201 291 1632

HAUPP., NY - Aug 25 Comic Books & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), Ramada Inn 1515 Vets Hwy, 10am 4pm, A 50¢ Dennis, PH 516 724 7422 (6-7)

PACIFIC

STATES IN REGION: Alaska, Calif, Hawai, Ore and Wash

LOS ANGELES, CA - July 7 Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C SF), Wilshire Palms Hotel 3400 Wilshire Blvd, 10am 5pm, A $1 50 Bruce Schwartz, 921 N Gardner Apt 9, Los Angeles, CA 90046 PH 213 874 7295

LOS ANGELES, CA - July 13 14 - Creation Show (C DW ST) Hyatt Regency Hotel, 711 S Hope St, A n/a Creation Box 7155, Garden City NY 11530

SAN JOSE, CA - July 26-28 - Timecon 85 (DW SF) Convention Center, M SF, Sheraton Inn & Red Blossom Hill Rd San Jose, CA 95123 PH 408-629-8078

SAN DIEGO, CA - July 29-31 - Con Is, Comic Book Industry Trade Show (C) A n/a

SAN DIEGO, CA - Aug 1-4 San Diego Comic Con (C) Convention & Performing Arts Center 2nd & B Sts Downtown, A n/a Larry Geeck, PO Box 17066, San Diego CA 92117 PH 619 464-1791

LOS ANGELES, CA - Aug 4 Comic Book & Science Fiction Convention (C SF), Ambassador Hotel, 3400 Wilshire Blvd 10am 5pm, A $1 50 Bruce Schwartz, 921 N Gardner, Apt 9, Los Angeles CA 90046 PH 213-874 7295

OAKLAND, CA - Aug 10-11 BarksCon West (C), Hyatt, 455 Hegenberger Rd, A $10, F $100 John Nichols PO Box 616 Victoria VA 23974 PH 804 696 2925

LOS ANGELES, CA - Aug 10-11 Science Fiction, Horror & Fantasy Con (SF, F, ST DW), Hyatt Regency Hotel, 711 S Hope St, A $12 Douglas Wright, PO Box 69308, W Hollywood CA 90069 PH 213-656 1266

SEATTLE, WA - Aug 25 Center Con 6 (C) Flag Pavilion, Seattle Center, A $1 Bill Wormstedt Box 2043, Kirkland WA 98083 PH 206 823 7129

MONTEREY, CA - Aug 25 - American Con (C), Monterey Conference Center, 1 Portola Plaza, 11am-5pm, A $3 Dan Vado PO Box 6993, San Jose, CA 95150 PH 408 279 8070

PLAINS

STATES IN REGION Iowa, Kan Minn, Mo, Neb, N D and S D

BELLEVUE, NE - July 6 River City Comic Book & Baseball Card Show (C, Cd), South Roads Mall Hwy 73 & 75, 10am-9pm, A free, T 40 F $25 Bill Bohn, 3046 Kansas Dr, Bellevue, NE 68005 PH 402-731-5220

SOUTH CENTRAL

STATES IN REGION: Ark, La Okla and Tex

NEW ORLEANS, LA - July 12-14 - Panopticon (DW) PO Box 57647 New Orleans LA 70157

HOUSTON, TX - July 26-28 - Comix Fair 8 (C), Ramada Hote NWX, 12801 NW Freeway A n/a Michael Betker 1103 W Tri Oaks Suite 181 Houston, TX 77043 PH 713 556 9647

KENNER, LA - Aug 9 11 Vul-Con XII (DW, ST, F C, M, G triv a), Airport Hilton A $15 before July 8, $20 at door F $35 before July 8, $45 after Jim Mule PO Box 8087 New Orleans LA 70182 PH 504 454 0963

SOUTHEAST

STATES IN REGION Ala, Fla, Ga, Miss and Tenn

ORLANDO, FL July 28 - Orlando Collector's Con (C, SF), Sheraton Inn, 736 Lee Rd, 10am-5pm, A $1 Jim Ivey, 561 Obispo Ave Orlando, FL 32807

ATLANTA, GA Aug 2-4 - 11th Annual Atlanta Fantasy Fair (C, F) Omni International Hotel & GA World Congress Center, One Omni International al, A $21 before 6-30 $25 thereafter SASE Lamar Waldron PO Box 566 Marietta GA 30061 PH 404-425-8095

FT. LAUDERDALE, FL - Aug 10-11 - South FL Fantasy Fair(C), Ramada Inn Airport 10am-8pm, A $5 S FL Fantasy Fair, 1788 NE 163rd St, N Miami Beach FL 33162

CANADA

OTTAWA, ONTARIO July 19-21 Maplecon 7 Science Fiction & Comic Book Convention (C, SF), Carleton University, A n/a Maplecon 7, PO Box 3156, Stn D Ottawa, ON Canada

KAMLOOPS, BC - Aug 4 - Kamloops Comic Club 2nd Annual Comic Convention (C), Canadian Inn Hotel, A n/a Lou Capone Kamloops Comic Club, 343 Tranquille Rd Kamloops, BC, V2B 3G4, Canada

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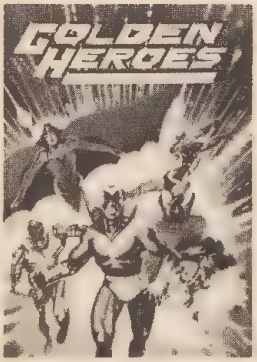

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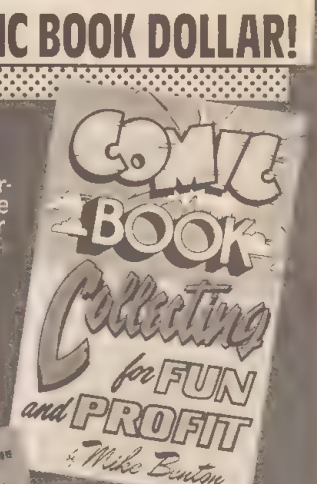

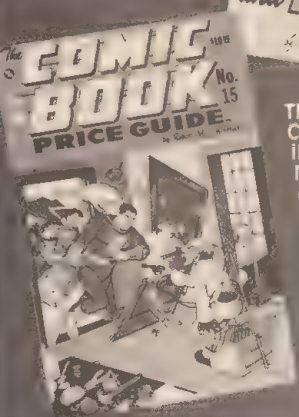

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4111 Black & White, Wanted
4112 Black & White, To Trade
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4121 Classic, Wanted
4122 Classics, To Trade
4123 Classics, Mail Bid
4130 DC, For Sale
4131 DC, Wanted
4132 DC, To Trade
4133 DC, Mail Bid
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4141 Deli/Gold Key/Whitman, Wanted
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4190 Harvey, For Sale
4191 Harvey, Wanted
4192 Harvey, To Trade
4193 Harvey, Mail Bid
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4240 Underground, For Sale
4241 Underground, Wanted
4242 Underground, To Trade
4243 Underground, Mail Bid
4250 War, For Sale
4251 War, Wanted
4252 War, To Trade
4253 War, Mail Bid
4260 Western, For Sale
4261 Western, Wanted
4262 Western, To Trade
4263 Western, Mail Bid
4300 Golden Age, For Sale
4301 Golden Age, Wanted
4302 Golden Age, To Trade
4303 Golden Age, Mail Bid
4310 Silver Age, For Sale
4311 Silver Age, Wanted
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4423 Books — General, Mail Bid
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4600 Reprints, For Sale
4601 Reprints, Wanted
4602 Reprints, To Trade
4603 Reprints, Mail Bid
4610 Portfolios/Posters, For Sale
4611 Portfolios/Posters, Wanted
4612 Portfolios/Posters, To Trade
4613 Portfolios/Posters, Mail Bid
4700 Toys, Games, For Sale
4701 Toys, Games, Wanted
4702 Toys, Games, To Trade
4703 Toys, Games, Mail Bid
4800 Fanzines, For Sale
4801 Fanzines, Wanted
4802 Fanzines, To Trade
4803 Fanzines, Mail Bid
4900 Newspaper Strips, For Sale
4901 Newspaper Strips, Wanted
4902 Newspaper Strips, To Trade
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1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
State		St.,	Iola,		WI	54990	715-445-2214	
10		11	12		13	Free Zip	14	

CLASSIFIED REQUIREMENTS: Please print and punctuate. Not responsible for errors due to longhand or illegible copy. Abbreviations count 1 word each, hyphenated words count as 2 words. Zip Code free. Advertiser must file permanent or business address with publisher before placing P.O. box address ad.

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Space	1 Time	4 Times
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3	62.00	55.80
4	81.00	72.90
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6	116.00	105.40
8	152.00	136.80
10 1/3 Page	185.00	166.50
12	220.00	198.00
15 1/2 Page	270.00	253.00
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Please insert the following advertisement under the # _____ Classification.

1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30

IMPORTANT — Include name and address exactly as you wish it to appear. In all ads where you use a box number as your address we require — for our records only — your complete name and street address.

Number of words _____ x Number of Classification _____ - Total Enclosed $ _____

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#5 VF/NM; Rare 2500.00
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#6 F 400.00

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Human Torch
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#20-30 .....14.00
#31-40 .....14.00
#41-50 .....7.00
#51-60 .....6.00
#61-95 .....4.00
#96-98; drug issues 17.00
#100 .....15.00
#101, 102 .....8.00
#103-120 .....3.00
#121, 122; death of Gwen Stacy, Green Goblin 28.00
#123-160 .....2.50
#161, 162 .....7.50
#164-199 .....1.50
#200 .....3.75
#201-251 .....1.00
#252; new costume .5.00

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#5-10 .....36.00
#11-20 .....20.00
#21-30 .....7.50
#31-40 .....5.00
#41-50 .....4.50
#51, 52, 54-56 .....6.00
#57, 58 .....12.00
#59-67 .....8.00
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